ST. BERNARD'S SERMONS
FOR THE SEASONS AND THE
PRINCIPAL FESTIVALS OF THE YEAR

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ST. BERNARD'S SERMONS

FOR THE

SEASONS & PRINCIPAL FESTIVALS OF THE YEAR

" *For Beatrice when I looked to see,*
I saw instead a Senior at my side
Robed as the rest in glory. Joy benign
Glowed in his eye and o'er his cheek diffused,
With gestures such as spake a father's love.

. . . . . .

And thus the Senior, holy and revered :
' That thou at length mayst happily conclude
Thy voyage (to which end I was dispatched,
By supplication moved and holy love)
Let thy upsoaring vision range at large
This garden through : for so, by ray divine
Kindled, thy ken a higher flight shall mount ;
And from heaven's Queen, whom fervent I adore,
All gracious aid defend us ; for that I
Am her own faithful Bernard.' "

—DANTE, *Parad.*, XXXI. (Cary's Translation).

ST. BERNARD'S SERMONS

FOR THE

SEASONS & PRINCIPAL FESTIVALS OF THE YEAR

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL LATIN

BY

A PRIEST OF MOUNT MELLERAY

VOL. II.

BROWNE AND NOLAN, LIMITED
DUBLIN BELFAST CORK WATERFORD

3496

Nihil Obstat

FR. STANISLAUS HICKEY, O.C.R.,
Censor.

die Maii 18, 1923.

Imprimatur :

FR. JEAN-BAPTISTE OLLITRANT DE KERYVALLAN,
Abbas Generalis, O.C.R.

die Junii 12, 1923.

Nihil Obstat :

GULIELMUS CANONICUS BYRNE, S.T.L.,
Censor deputatus.

Imprimi potest :

✠ BERNARDUS,
Episcopus Waterfordiensis
et Lismorensis.

WATERFORDIAE, die 22 Aprilis, 1923.

To

HIS EMINENCE

Michael Cardinal Logue

ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH AND LORD PRIMATE OF ALL IRELAND
SUCCESSOR OF ST. PATRICK IN THE PRIMATIAL SEE,
COARB ALSO OF ST. MALACHY
WHO FIRST INTRODUCED INTO IRELAND THE CHILDREN OF
ST. BERNARD, ESTABLISHING THEM AT MELLIFONT,

THIS TRANSLATION OF THE SERMONS

OF THE ABBOT OF CLAIRVAUX

FOR THE SEASONS AND PRINCIPAL FESTIVALS
OF THE YEAR

IS HUMBLY AND RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

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ST. BERNARD'S SERMONS

FIRST SERMON FOR THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY.

On the Three Manifestations of Christ.

"The benignity and Humanity of God our Saviour have appeared."—Titus iii. 4.

"The benignity and Humanity of God our Saviour have appeared."* Thanks be to God, by Whom our consolation so abounds even in this pilgrimage, in this exile, in this valley of tears. You may have noticed, my brethren, that I make it a point to speak often thuswise of our earthly existence, to the end that you may never forget that we are only wayfarers here, far removed from the home-land, driven forth from our inheritance. For he who does not realise his desolation lacks the power to appreciate consolation. And he who does not know the need he has of divine consolation is proved by the fact to be void of the grace

* So the Saint understands here the text, "Apparuit benignitas et humanitas Salvatoris nostri Dei," although elsewhere he adopts the usual interpretation, "The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared." The word "humanitas" is ambiguous, but the Greek term, "φιλανθρωπία," makes the meaning plain enough.—(Translator.)

of God.* Hence it is that the men of the world, preoccupied as they are with their temporal affairs and the gratification of their passions, never think of asking for mercy, because they are unconscious of their misery. But you to whom it has not been said in vain, "Be still and see that I am God" (Ps. xlv. 11), and of whom the same Prophet says in another psalm, "He will show forth to His people the power of His works" (Ps. cx. 6): you, I say, who are not entangled in worldly occupations, attend and see what is the spiritual consolation offered us. You who are not unaware that this life is an exile, do you at least pay heed to the announcement that succour has been sent to us from heaven. For we are told that, "the benignity and Humanity of God our Saviour have appeared." Until the appearance of His Humanity, His benignity lay concealed from our view. True, the latter existed even before the Humanity, since "the mercy of the Lord is from eternity" (Ps. cii. 17). But how could men know that it was so great? It was promised indeed but not yet experienced: hence many had even lost faith in it. "At sundry times and in divers manners" the Lord "spoke to the fathers by the prophets" (Heb. i. 1), saying, "I think towards you thoughts of peace and not of affliction" (Jer. xxix. 11). But what reply did man make, man who felt already the affliction and was still a stranger to peace? "How long will you cry out 'peace, peace,'

* Yes, for such a one falls under the woe pronounced against those who have their consolation in this life (Luke vi. 24), he is a friend of this world and therefore an enemy of God (James iv. 4). Grace detaches the heart from all human consolation and thus creates a conscious need of the divine: for we cannot do without some comfort. He therefore who does not feel this need is proved by the fact to be void of grace.

when there is no peace?" (Ezech. xiii. 10). Therefore did "the angels of peace weep bitterly" (Is. xxxiii. 7), saying, "Lord, who hath believed our report?" (ibid. liii. 1). But now let men give credit even to their own sight, because the testimonies of God "are become exceedingly credible" (Ps. xcii. 5). For "He hath set His tabernacle in the sun" (Ps. xviii. 6), in order that it may be manifest even to the eye which is "troubled" (Ps. vi. 8).

Behold peace no longer promised but conferred; no longer delayed but given; no longer predicted but bestowed. Behold, God the Father has sent down to earth a scrip, as it were, filled with His mercy; a scrip, I say, which shall be rent in the passion, so that the treasure it contains and conceals shall be poured out for our ransom; a scrip small indeed, but full of preciousness. For it is a Little One that is given to us (Is. ix. 6), yet "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead" (Col. ii. 9). He came to us in the flesh that even thus He might make Himself manifest to our carnal minds; and that when His Humanity appeared, His benignity also might be acknowledged. For when the Humanity of God has become known, His benignity can no longer be questioned. In what way, indeed, could He have better commended to us His benignity than by assuming our flesh? *Our* flesh, I say, not Adam's, that is, not the flesh of Adam as it was before his fall.* What greater proof could He have given us of His mercy than by thus taking upon Him our misery? And where shall we find an

* In Its gift of integrity the holy Flesh of Christ resembled that of Adam as it was before the fall, but like ours It was subject during Its earthly existence to suffering and death, the penalties of the original transgression.—(Translator.)

instance of piety comparable to that through which the Word of God has become grass * for our sakes? O Lord, "what is man, that Thou shouldst magnify him? Or why dost Thou set Thy heart upon him?" (Job vii. 17). Let man infer from this what an object of solicitude he is to his God. Let him understand from this what are God's thoughts and feelings with regard to him. Seek not, O man, for such knowledge in the sufferings which *thou* hast to endure, but rather in those to which *He* submitted for thy sake. How highly He esteems thee learn from what He has done for thee, so that His benignity may appear to thee in His Humanity. For the less He has made Himself in His Humanity, the greater has He been revealed in His goodness; and the more He humbles Himself on my account, the more powerfully He engages my love. "The benignity and Humanity of God our Saviour have appeared," cries out St. Paul. Oh, how great and how manifest is now the benignity of God! how great and manifest His Humanity! And the Apostle was careful to make mention of the Humanity of God, in order that he might give indubitable evidence of His benignity.

When the Angel Gabriel was sent to Mary, he spoke to her of the Son of God, Whom, however, he did not directly call by the name of God. But God be praised for having given us in St. Paul an angel of our own race to supply what the other omitted. For this angel of ours had the Spirit of God no less than Gabriel, and in that Spirit announced what was very necessary to us to know. What, in fact, could so inspire us with faith, strengthen our hope, and inflame our charity as the

* Allusion to Isaias xlv. 6, "All flesh is grass."—(Translator.)

Humanity of God? To our own angel, accordingly, has been reserved that which the others passed over. For it was not becoming that each should announce everything, but rather that we should receive different revelations from different heralds with joy and gratitude, and return worthy thanks to all. There is one point, however, as to which the Apostle and the Angels who announced the nativity of Christ are in agreement: I mean the title of Saviour. To Mary, indeed, as having been more fully instructed by the Spirit, Gabriel only indicated this title, saying to her, "And thou shalt call His name Jesus" (Luke i. 31). But the Angel that appeared to Joseph not only mentioned the name of Jesus, but even explained the cause of its imposition, in the words, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21). To the shepherds also it was announced as "good tidings of great joy" that a Saviour was born to them, Christ the Lord (Luke ii. 10, 11). Somewhat similar is the Apostle's announcement, "The benignity and Humanity of God our Saviour have appeared." So by none of these heralds has the sweet name of Saviour been omitted. That is well. For to me this title is the most necessary of all. What should I do on hearing of my Lord's coming, were I not also assured that He came as a Saviour? Should I not flee away like Adam, who fled from His presence yet could not escape Him? (Gen. iii. 8). Should I not despair, hearing that He was coming Whose law I had so transgressed, Whose patience I had so abused, for Whose benefits I had shown so little gratitude? What, therefore, could be more consoling to me than to hear Him called by the

sweet and reassuring name of Saviour? Hence He has said of Himself, "God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by Him" (John iii. 17). Now I shall draw near with confidence, now I shall trustfully plead for pardon. For wherefore should I fear, when the Saviour comes into my house? Against Him only have I sinned (Ps. l. 6); and whatsoever He will pardon to me can no longer be laid to my charge. For it is lawful for Him to do what He wills (Matt. xx. 15). "It is God That justifieth. Who is he that shall condemn? Or who shall accuse against the elect of God?" (Rom. vii. 33-4). Therefore we ought to rejoice that He has come to us in our dwelling-place and in our own nature, for thus He will show Himself more ready to forgive.

Moreover, He has come as a Little One, and so can be appeased without difficulty. Who does not know how easily little ones forgive? Lo, we may now be reconciled to Him for a little, if only we love Him and value Him not a little but much. For a little, I say, yet not without repentance: although our repentance is itself but a little thing. We are poor and have only a little to give. Nevertheless for that little we can be reconciled, if we so wish. This wretched body of mine is all that I can offer. But if I give it, I have given enough. However, should more be demanded, I will offer in addition the Body of Christ. For It is flesh of my flesh and truly my own. So the Prophet has said, "A Child is born to us and a Son is given to us" (Is. ix. 6). From Thee, O Lord, I will make good whatever is wanting in myself. O most sweet reconciliation! O most pleasant satisfaction! O reconciliation truly cheap but exceedingly profitable!

O satisfaction light indeed, but not to be lightly valued! For in proportion as it is easy now, it shall be difficult hereafter. And just as there is no one who cannot be reconciled in this life, so shall reconciliation be possible to no one in the life to come: because, as in the present God has shown Himself benign beyond all hope and thought, so may we expect Him to show Himself in the future rigorous beyond all anticipation. Despise not, therefore, the mercy of the Lord, unless thou desirest to have experience of His justice, of His anger, of His indignation, of His jealousy, of His fury. "O Lord, rebuke me not in Thy fury, nor chastise me in Thy anger" (Ps. vi. 1). The excess of His mildness at His first coming as Saviour is intended to warn thee how great shall be His severity when He comes again as Judge. Thou canst estimate the rigour of the future vengeance from the liberality of the present indulgence. For God is not less infinite and immense in His justice than He is in His mercy: if "He is bountiful to forgive" (Is. lv. 7), He is equally bountiful to punish. But His mercy has claimed for itself the right of precedence; so that, if we wish, His justice shall be able to find none on whom to exercise its severity. For the reason why He has willed to manifest His benignity before His severity is this: that, having been reconciled through the former, we may be able with security to contemplate the latter. Therefore did He determine not only to come down upon earth, but even to reveal Himself; and not only to be born, but even to make Himself known.

Indeed it is to show honour to this manifestation of Himself by God that to-day is kept as a solemn

festival, the glorious feast of the Epiphany. For on this day the Magi came from the east, seeking the risen Sun of Justice, Him, namely, of Whom it is written, "Behold a Man, the Orient is His name" (Zach. vi. 12). To-day, following the guidance of the new-risen star, they adored the Virgin's new-born Offspring. Do we not find in this as much consolation as in the words of St. Paul about which I have been speaking? The Apostle declares Jesus to be God: the Magi do the same, not indeed with their voice, but by their action. What are you doing, O Magi, what are you doing, I say? Are you adoring a mere Suckling, in a vile stable, dressed in the garments of poverty? Am I therefore to believe that this Infant is God? "Surely, the Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven" (Ps. x. 5): and do you expect to find Him in a common cattle-shed, in the arms of a human mother? And what are you doing again in offering Him your gold? He is a King, then, is He? But where is the royal palace? where is His throne? where the throng of courtiers that wait upon His Person? Am I to consider the stable His palace? the manger His throne? and Mary and Joseph as constituting His regal court? How are the wise become so foolish as to render divine honours to a Little Child, undeserving (apparently) of any consideration, both on account of His own immaturity and by reason of His parents' poverty? But the truth is: they had made themselves foolish in order to become wise, and they had learned already from the Holy Spirit what was afterwards to be announced by the Apostle, "If any man seem to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise"

(1 Cor. iii. 18). "For seeing that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it hath pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. i. 21). Was there not good reason to fear, my brethren, that these men would be scandalised, and believe themselves imposed upon, when they saw the utter poverty and humility of Him Whom they came to worship? From the royal city of Jerusalem, where they naturally expected to find the new-born King, they are directed to the insignificant village of Bethlehem; they enter a stable; they find the little Infant wrapped in poor swaddling-clothes. But they are not disgusted, or offended, or scandalised. In spite of the stable, in spite of the swaddling-clothes, in spite of the helplessness of the Suckling, they fall upon their faces to honour Him as their King and to adore Him as their God. But doubtless the same Holy Spirit Who conducted them hither, instructed them also, and He Who guided them exteriorly by His star, enlightened their hearts interiorly by His grace. To-day, accordingly, has been rendered illustrious by the Lord by this manifestation of Himself, and made holy and venerable by the devout adoration of the Magi.

But this is not the only manifestation of the Lord commemorated on the present festival: included with it is another—as we have been taught by our fathers—which although occurring long after, is believed to have taken place on the anniversary of the apparition to the Magi. For when Christ, Who according to His Divinity is "always the self-same, and His years shall not fail" (Ps. ci. 28), when Christ, I say, had now completed the thirtieth year of His mortal existence

He came amongst the crowds to be baptised by John. He Who alone was without sin, came like one of the common people. Who then would have believed Him to be the Son of God? Who could have recognised in Him the Lord of Majesty? O Lord, Thou hast indeed humbled Thyself profoundly, Thou hast indeed concealed Thyself in the lowest place of all. Nevertheless, Thou art not able to hide Thyself from the Baptist. Is not he the same who recognised Thee of old, before either Thou or he wast born? Is not he the same to whom Thou wast visible through the double prison wall of Mary's womb and Elizabeth's? And since he could not then announce Thy presence to the people, he at least made it known to his mother by leaping for joy in her womb (Luke ii. 41). How does he act on the present occasion? The Evangelist shall inform us: "John saw Jesus coming to him, and he saith: Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him Who taketh away the sins of the world" (John i. 29). Oh, truly a Lamb is Jesus, truly a Lamb in His humility and meekness! "Behold the Lamb of God," says the Baptist, "Behold Him Who taketh away the sins of the world." Behold Him Who "maketh purgation of sins" (Heb. i. 3). Behold Him Who has come to wash away our sewage! And nevertheless, even after this testimony, He wishes to be baptised by John.

What wonder if the Baptist trembles? What wonder, I say, if he, who is but a man, quakes with fear and dares not touch that thrice-holy Head, the Head of God, adorable to the Angels, venerable to the Powers, terrible to the Principalities? And dost Thou, Lord Jesus, wish to be baptised? But wherefore? What need canst Thou have of baptism? Does he that is

hale require medicine? Or he that is clean purgation? Whence hast Thou derived the sin for the removal of which baptism is necessary? Is it from Thy Father? Thou hast indeed a Father, but that Father is God; and Thou art His Co-Equal, God of God and Light of Light. Now who does not know that sin is impossible to God? Perhaps Thou hast inherited sin from Thy Mother? For Thou hast a Mother also, yet a virgin Mother. What sin, therefore, could have been transmitted to Thee by her who conceived Thee without stain, and brought Thee forth without prejudice to her virginity? What stain can be found in the "Lamb without blemish"? (Exod. xii. 12). "I ought to be baptised by Thee," protested John, "and comest Thou to me?" (Matt. iii. 14). Great is the humility exhibited on both sides. Nevertheless, there can be no comparison between the humility of John and that of Jesus. For how could man do otherwise than humble himself in presence of an humble God? "Suffer it to be so now," answered the Lord, "for so it becometh us to fulfil all justice" (ibid. 15). John acquiesced and was obedient: he administered baptism to the Lamb of God and in doing so purified the waters. My brethren, it was not Christ but ourselves whom that baptism cleansed. For, as you know, He then washed the waters that they might have the power to wash us from our stains.

But perchance you do not place full confidence in the testimony of John. For he also is but a man, and therefore not above suspicion.* Besides, he is a kinsman of Him to Whom he bears testimony. Receive,

* Allusion to Ps. cxv. 11, and Rom. iii. 4, "Every man is a liar."

therefore, a testimony greater than John's, the testimony of the descending Dove (Matt. iii. 16). Very appropriately did the Spirit assume the form of a dove when He came down to designate the Lamb of God, because there is nothing more akin to a lamb than a dove. What the lamb is amongst the beasts of the field, that the dove is amongst the birds of the air. Perfect innocence is the characteristic of both, perfect meekness, perfect simplicity. For what can be further removed from every species of malice than a lamb or a dove? They know not how to hurt anyone, how to inflict injury on anyone. However, lest you should suppose the advent of the Dove was due to mere chance, attend to the testimony of God the Father. Behold "the God of Majesty hath thundered, the Lord upon many waters" (Ps. xxviii. 3); and the voice of the Father is heard saying, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17). He is in truth the only one in Whom the Father can find nothing to displease Him, nothing that offends the eyes of His majesty. Hence the Son also has said of Himself, "I do always the things that please Him" (John viii. 29). "Hear ye Him" (Mark ix. 6). Now at last, O Lord Jesus, begin to speak. How long wilt Thou remain silent? How long wilt Thou dissemble? Thou hast held Thy peace a great while, yea, a very great while. But now the Father Himself has given Thee permission to speak. O Thou Who art the Power and the Wisdom of God, how long wilt Thou conceal Thyself amongst the multitude, as one of the weak and foolish? How long, O noble Monarch, King of heaven, how long wilt Thou suffer Thyself to be called and reputed the Son of

the Carpenter? For the Evangelist Luke testifies that He was supposed to be the Son of Joseph (Luke iii. 23). O humility, the characteristic virtue of Christ! O sublime humility, how thou dost confound our pride and our vanity! I possess a little knowledge, or rather I seem to myself to possess a little knowledge, and lo! I am no longer able to restrain my tongue. With equal impudence and imprudence I thrust myself forward and try to make a parade, prompt to speak, eager to instruct, and very reluctant to listen. Now why did Christ remain silent so long and concealed from public notice? Was it because He was afraid of vainglory? But wherefore should He have any fear of vainglory, Who is Himself the true Glory of the Father? Nevertheless, He did fear it, although not for Himself. He feared it for us, for whom He knew it was dangerous. His precautions were for our sakes: He desired that we should learn from His example. Therefore, even while His tongue was silent, He was teaching us by His actions; and that which we were afterwaads to learn from His lips was already proclaimed aloud by His conduct: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart" (Matt. xi. 29). For is it not owing to Our Lord's humility that so little has been recorded of His childhood, and nothing at all of His later life down to His thirtieth year? Now, however, He can hide Himself no longer, having been so clearly designated by the Father. Notice that in His first manifestation of Himself, He willed to appear in His Virgin Mother's company, for the reason, as I suppose, that virginity is closely allied to modesty and humility.

There is a third manifestation mentioned in the

Gospel. This also is commemorated on the present festival. The Lord Jesus was invited to a marriage feast during which, the wine having failed, the people of the house were put to confusion. But He, taking pity on their embarrassment, changed water into wine. And the Evangelist tells us that this was the beginning of His miracles (John ii. 11). To sum up, then: in the first manifestation, He reveals Himself as a true man, appearing as a little Infant in the arms of His Mother; in the second, He is declared to be the true Son of God by the Father's testimony; whilst in the third He stands revealed as Himself true God, Whose will overrules the laws of nature. Therefore, with so many testimonies and proofs does the feast of to-day fortify our faith and confirm our hope, and with so many incentives enkindle our charity.*

* An examination of the Office for the Feast of the Epiphany will show that on this day the Church commemorates three distinct manifestations of Christ, at Bethlehem, at the Jordan, and at Cana. Thus the hymn for vespers—taken from our own Sedulius—has a special stanza devoted to each of the three manifestations, of which the following is a translation :—

I.

Led by the star that moves before,
The Light by light the Magi seek,
And offering their gifts, adore
As very God an Infant weak.

II.

The Lamb of God went down to-day
To Jordan's flood to purify
Its waters and to wash away
Our sins Who could all sin deny.

III.

A new display of power divine!
The water saw or seemed to see
Its Lord, and reddened into wine,
As blushing for its poverty.

—(Translator.)

SECOND SERMON FOR THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY.

On the Faith of the Magi and the Symbolic Meaning of their Gifts.

"Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and see King Solomon in the diadem wherewith His Mother hath crowned Him in the day of His espousals."—Cant. iii. 11.

"Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and see King Solomon." We read, my brethren, of three manifestations of the Lord; and we are told that these manifestations took place on the same day, although not in the same year. The third was doubtless very wonderful, wonderful also the second, but the first was more wonderful and more admirable than either. I am lost in admiration on beholding water changed to wine at the word of the Saviour; I marvel at the solemn and simultaneous testimony rendered to Him by the Baptist, by the Dove, and by the voice of the heavenly Father; but the most astonishing thing of all is His acknowledgment by the Magi. For their adoration and the offering of incense clearly indicate that they recognised Him to be God. Indeed, they acknowledged not only His Divinity, but also His Royalty, which the present of gold symbolically designated. Nor were they ignorant of "the great mystery of godliness" (1 Tim. iii. 16), since by the gift of myrrh they expressed their belief in His mortality. And so the Magi render divine honours and offer princely gifts to One Who is as yet only a Baby in arms! But where, O Magi,

where, I ask, is the royal purple of this King? Do you point to the poor swaddling-clothes which cover Him? If He be a King, He must have a diadem: where is it? But indeed you behold Him "in the diadem wherewith His Mother hath crowned Him" (Cant. iii. 11), in the "sack-cloth" of His mortality, whereof He shall say to the Father on rising from the tomb, "Thou hast cut My sack-cloth, and compassed Me with gladness" (Ps. xxix. 12). "Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and see King Solomon in the diadem wherewith His Mother hath crowned Him." Go forth, ye angelic powers! Go forth, ye inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem! Go forth and see your King crowned with the diadem of our humanity, "with the diadem wherewith His Mother hath crowned Him." Here is a new delight of which you have never had experience until now, a new sweetness which you have never before tasted. His majesty you know well enough, but you have not yet seen His lowliness. "Go forth," therefore, "and see King Solomon in the diadem wherewith His Mother hath crowned Him."

But the holy angels do not need to be thus exhorted by us to contemplate Him on Whom they "desire to look" (1 Peter i. 12). And the more familiar they are with His loftiness, the more do they love and value His littleness. Hence, although we have greater cause for rejoicing, since "the Child is born to us, and the Son is given to us" (Is. ix. 6), nevertheless they are beforehand, exhorting us instead of waiting to be exhorted by us. We have proof of this in the announcement by the Angel to the shepherds of "good tidings of great joy" (Luke ii. 10) and in the apparition with him of a "multitude of the heavenly host,

praising God" (ibid. 13). It is to you, therefore, worldly souls, who are given the name, "daughters of Sion," because you more resemble weak and delicate daughters than sturdy sons, as possessing no manly fortitude, no virile strength of character: it is to you I address the exhortation, "Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and see King Solomon in the diadem wherewith His Mother hath crowned Him." Go forth from the senses of the body to the understanding of the mind; from the servitude of carnal concupiscence, to the liberty of a spiritual intelligence. "Go forth out of your country, and from your kindred, and out of your father's house" (Gen. xii. 1), and see the Lord as King Solomon. Otherwise, it will not be safe for you to see Him as Ecclesiastes. For the Same Who, during the time of this exile, shows Himself to us as Solomon, that is to say, as the "Peaceful One," will appear at the judgment as Ecclesiastes, that is, as the Reprover, and in the kingdom as Idida (4 Kings xxii. 1), that is, as the "Beloved of the Lord." For in exile He is meek and amiable, whilst at the judgment He will reveal Himself as just and terrible, glorious and admirable in the heavenly kingdom. "Go forth," therefore, "and see King Solomon": for He is everywhere King. It is true, His "kingdom is not of this world" (John xviii. 36). Nevertheless, even in this world, He is a King. For when asked, "Art Thou a King?" He answered, "For this was I born and for this came I into the world" (ibid. 37). Here, then, He is the Regulator of morals, at the judgment He will be the Discerner of merits, and in the kingdom the Bestower of rewards.

"Go forth," therefore, "ye daughters of Sion, and

see King Solomon in the diadem wherewith His Mother hath crowned Him," in the diadem of poverty, in the diadem of misery. For His stepmother—the Synagogue—hath also crowned Him, but with a crown of thorns, a crown of pain; and He is to be crowned hereafter by the hands of His loyal subjects with the crown of justice, when His angels shall go forth and "gather out of His kingdom all scandals" (Matt. xiii. 41), when He "shall come to judgment with the ancients of His people" (Is. iii. 14), when "the whole world shall fight for Him against the unwise" (Is. v. 21). His Father, too, hath crowned Him with a crown of glory, according to the testimony of the Psalmist, where he sings, "Thou hast crowned Him, O Lord, with glory and honour" (Ps. viii. 6). But "go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and see Him now in the diadem wherewith His Mother hath crowned Him." Embrace lovingly the crown of your King Who for your sakes has made Himself a Little One; and in company with the Magi, whose faith and devotion are proposed to you to-day as your models, adore His humility. My brethren, to what shall I compare these men, or to what shall I liken them? (Lament. ii. 13). I consider the faith of the Penitent Thief, and I consider the confession of the Centurion: but I feel obliged to give the preference to the Magi over them, forasmuch as *they* believed and confessed Christ only after He had performed many miracles, after He had been preached by many, and adored by many. Let us consider, nevertheless, the words which they spoke. The Thief, then, as he hung upon his cross, cried aloud to the Lord, saying, "Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy kingdom" (Luke xxiii. 42).

What? Is He Whom thou addressest on the way to a kingdom through the ignominious death of the cross? Who hath informed thee, poor Thief, that it behoved Christ to suffer "and so to enter into His glory"? (Luke xxiv. 26). And thou, O Centurion, by what indication hast thou been able to recognise Him? "And the centurion," so we read, "who stood over against Him, seeing that crying out in this manner He had given up the ghost, said: Indeed this Man was the Son of God" (Mark xv. 39). A strange thing, surely, and worthy of all admiration.

Wherefore, brethren, I ask you to examine and see how penetrating is the glance of faith. Consider attentively what lyncean eyes it has. It recognises the Son of God in a mere suckling; it recognises Him in one crucified as a criminal; it recognises Him in a dying Man: for the Thief recognised Him on the cross transpierced with nails; the Magi recognised Him in the stable wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and the Centurion recognised Him as Life in death. Again, the Magi beheld and acknowledged the Power of God in the weakness of a tender little Body; whilst to the Centurion the Supreme Spirit revealed Himself in the very act of expiring. The former, I say, recognised the Word of God under the image of a speechless Babe, and whatever the Thief and the Centurion confessed by their words, *they* confessed by their offerings. The Thief proclaimed the kingship of Christ, whilst the Centurion declared Him to be at once a Man and the Son of God. Now, what else but the same three attributes can the presents of the Magi be understood to symbolise, except, indeed, that by the gift of incense they rather pronounce Him to be God than the Son

of God? I pray God, therefore, dearest brethren, that you may profit by the immense charity which the Lord of Majesty has shown us, by the profound abasement to which He submitted for our sakes, and by the infinite goodness which has been revealed through the humility of Christ. Let us return thanks to our Redeemer and our Mediator by Whom we have been taught how great is the good-will of God the Father in our regard. For we know now that His dispositions towards us are such that we can say with all security, "We therefore so run, not as at an uncertainty" (1 Cor. ix. 26). We cannot but believe that the Father has the same kindness for us as has been shown us by the Son Who has issued from His Heart.

THIRD SERMON FOR THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY.

On Imitating Herod and the Magi and on the Virtues commended in the different Manifestations.

"Where is He That is born King of the Jews?"—Matt. ii. 11.

I think it necessary, my brethren, according to my custom on other festivals, to explain to you the meaning of the present solemnity also. Sometimes I preach to you dehortative discourses on the subject of vice, and sermons of this kind are indeed very useful. It seems to me, however, that they are more suitable for ordinary days. But on festivals, and particularly on the principal feasts, I think we should rather occupy ourselves with what belongs to the mystery commemorated, so that our minds may be instructed and our affections excited. For how can you celebrate an event which you know not? Or how can you know if it be not announced to you? Wherefore, let it not seem burdensome to such as are learned in the law, if I accommodate myself to the capacity of the less enlightened, as the order of charity requires. Nor do I think that they shall be defrauded of their own proper aliments, if they will only allow the more simple, the common people, as it were, to be served first with the coarser meats. And they will show themselves thus willing if, out of regard for fraternal charity, they accept contentedly what is needful for

the uninstructed, although it may seem unnecessary to themselves. For they may afterwards gather up the fragments (John vi. 12) for their own use, by diligently reflecting on the points of greater subtlety, and, like "clean animals" (Gen. vii. 2), ruminating the delicate morsels which the less discerning pass over.

The name of the present solemnity, therefore, signifies an Apparition or Manifestation, such being the meaning of the Greek word Epiphany (ἐπιφάνεια). We are, consequently, celebrating to-day the manifestation of the Lord, not a single manifestation, however, but a threefold, as we have heard from our fathers. For on this day our Infant King, so soon after His nativity, was revealed by the guiding star to the first-fruits of the Gentiles. On this day also, when He Who, according to His Divinity, is "always the self-same and His years do not fail" (Ps. ci. 28), had already lived nearly thirty years in His mortal condition, He came to the Jordan, concealed in the crowds, and presented Himself to John to be baptised, but was made manifest by the testimony of God the Father. On this day, again, the wine failing at a marriage feast to which He had been invited with His followers, by an admirable exhibition of supernatural power, He changed water into wine. But I desire to dwell more particularly upon the manifestation of our Saviour as an Infant, both because it is so much sweeter than either of the other two, and also because, as you know, it is more especially commemorated in the solemnity of to-day.

To-day, then, as we are told in the Gospel, the Magi came from the Orient to Jerusalem. Rightly are they said to come from the Orient, since they announce to us the rising of the Sun of Justice and fill the whole

world with their gladsome tidings: the whole world, except perhaps unhappy Judaea, which, as hating the light, is only blinded still more by the brilliancy of the new dawn, and her dimmed eyes rendered darker than ever by the dazzling rays of the Eternal Sun. Let us hear now what the Magi said on arriving at Jerusalem from the East. "Where is He That is born King of the Jews?" What steadfast faith, and how absolutely undoubting! They do not inquire if He has been born; but they speak with full confidence and ask unhesitatingly, "Where is He That is born King of the Jews?" The mention of a new-born King alarms King Herod, who begins to suspect the advent of a rival. It is nothing wonderful, however, that Herod should be troubled thereat. But who can read without astonishment that Jerusalem, the city of God, the very name of which signifies "the vision of peace"—that "all Jerusalem was troubled with him" (Matt. ii. 3)? You perceive, my brethren, how much mischief may be done to a state by a wicked ruler, and how an ungodly king can form his subjects to the likeness of his own impiety. Unhappy indeed is the nation which is governed by a Herod, because it shall undoubtedly become a participant in Herod's guilt, and shall be troubled with Herod at every new birth of salvation. I trust that, by the help of God, no Herod shall ever rule over us, even though—which heaven forbid—one should be found in our society. For *he* is a Herod in malice and a Babylonian in cruelty whosoever attempts to destroy a newly-inspired religious sentiment and to "dash against the rock the little ones" of Israel (Ps. cxxxvi. 9). I mean to say whosoever resists or opposes even the first beginnings of

pious affections or salutary inspirations in his soul is manifestly striving with the Egyptians to murder the children of the Hebrew race, and persecutes with Herod the new-born Saviour. But let us now return to the inspired narrative which we have undertaken to study; for I am sure that if anyone here is conscious of the wickedness whereof I have been speaking, he will for the future be more watchful over himself, and will put away from him with horror the disposition of Herod, lest otherwise he should meet with the fate of Herod.

Well, then. The Magi having inquired concerning the new-born King of the Jews, King Herod interrogated the scribes as to the Saviour's birthplace. They answered by giving the name of the city for which, according to the Prophet's prediction, that honour was destined. Now it happened that when the travellers resumed their journey and had left Jerusalem, "behold the star which they had seen in the East, went before them" (Matt. ii. 9). Thus, as is clear, they were given to understand that it was through seeking for human counsel they had lost the divine guidance, and that their demand for natural evidence had been punished by the withdrawal of the heavenly light. And hence, on parting from Herod, "they rejoiced with exceeding great joy," because "the star again went before them, until it stood over where the Child was." Then "entering into the house, they found the Child with Mary His Mother, and falling down they adored Him" (ibid. 11). Tell me, O strangers, how such light has come to you? For "I have not found so great faith in Israel" (Matt. viii. 10). A common stable for a dwelling-place, a manger for a cradle: how is it you

do not turn away in disgust? How is it you are not scandalised at the appearance of the poor Mother and of the Infant at the breast?

But, as the Evangelist goes on, "opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh." Had they offered nothing but gold, it would have seemed perhaps that they simply wished to consult for the Mother's poverty, providing her with the means of bringing up her infant Son. But since, along with the gold, they offered frankincense and myrrh, we have good reason to suspect that by these gifts they meant to symbolise offerings of a spiritual kind. Now amongst the treasures of this world, gold appears to be reputed the most precious, and this we have all of us devotedly offered to the Saviour through His grace, by entirely renouncing the world and the riches thereof for His name's sake. But it is further necessary that, after utterly repudiating all earthly possessions, we should now long with most ardent desire for the riches of heaven. Thus we offer to the Lord the sweet odour of incense; for incense symbolises the prayers of the saints, as you may read in the Apocalypse of St. John (Apoc. v. 8). Hence the Royal Prophet also sings in one of his psalms, "Let my prayer be directed as incense in Thy sight" (Ps. cl. 2). So too it is said in another place, "The prayer of the just man pierceth the heavens" * (Ecclus. xxxv. 21)—the prayer, observe, not of every man,

* "Oratio justi coelos penetrat." The Vulgate has, "Oratio humiliantis se coelos penetrabit"—the prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the heavens. There is, however, but little difference in the sense. For as the Saint says (Sermon XLVII. on the Canticle of Canticles), "Who is the just man but the humble man?"—(Translator.)

but only of the just man. For "he that turneth away his ears from hearing the law, his prayer shall be an abomination" (Prov. xxviii. 9).

Moreover, if thou desirest to be just and art unwilling to turn away thine ear from hearing the commandments of the Lord, lest the Lord should likewise turn away His ear from thy prayers: it is necessary for thee not only to despise this present world, but also to chastise thine own flesh "and bring it into subjection" (1 Cor. ix. 27). For He Who said, "Every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth cannot be My disciple" (Luke xiv. 33), and elsewhere, "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and come, follow Me" (Matt. xix. 21): the Same has also said in another place, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke ix. 23)—which the Apostle explains for us where he writes, "They that are Christ's have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences" (Gal. v. 24). Let our prayer, consequently, soar aloft on the two wings of contempt of the world and mortification of the flesh; then there can be no doubt that it will pierce the heavens, and be directed as incense in the sight of the Lord. For then our sacrifice will be pleasing and our oblation acceptable, as including the myrrh now together with the gold and the frankincense. Myrrh is pungent indeed, nevertheless it is very useful, and preserves "the body which is dead because of sin" (Rom. viii. 10) from being dissolved in the corruption of vice. These few remarks are sufficient to show you how you may imitate the oblation of the Magi.

But inasmuch as I have spoken of the vocation of

the Magi as an apparition or manifestation, it is worth our while to examine and see what was manifested to them. Now, according to the testimony of St. Paul, "the benignity and Humanity of God our Saviour appeared" or became manifest (Titus iii. 4). And in truth we have just heard from the Gospel how the Magi, "entering into the house, found the Child with Mary, His Mother." In this infant Body, so fondly clasped to the Mother's virginal breast, what else is apparent except the reality of the Flesh assumed? And the fact that the Child is found with His Mother, what else does it signify save that He is a true Man and a true Son of man? But in the second manifestation, at the river Jordan, see if He is not openly proclaimed to be the Son of God by the voice of the Father. For the heavens were opened above His head, and the Holy Ghost descended upon Him, in bodily shape, in the form of a dove, and the Father's voice was heard, saying, "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 16, 17). This testimony makes it manifest enough, makes it evident and indubitable, that Christ is truly God, since the Son of God must Himself be God by necessary consequence. For are not the sons of men called men, and even in the case of the irrational animals, are not the offspring regarded by all as belonging to the same species as the parents? Nevertheless, so that no room at all might be left for sacrilegious error, He Who in the first manifestation was revealed as a true Man and a true Son of man, and in the second as the true Son of God, the Same now manifests Himself in the third as the true God, and the Omnipotent Author of nature whose course He changes at His pleasure. Therefore,

my dearest brethren, let us love Jesus Christ as a true Man and our Brother, let us honour Him as the Son of God, let us adore Him as very God. Let us confidently believe in Him, let us confidently entrust ourselves to Him, Who neither lacks the power to save us, since He is true God and the Son of God, nor the good will to save us, since He is as one of ourselves, a true Man and our true Brother. For how can He be inexorable to us for whose sake He has made Himself "like unto us passible" (James v. 17)?

If you desire to hear now, in connection with these manifestations, something which may be useful for your spiritual advancement, observe that in the first apparition Christ shows Himself as a little Child in the arms of His Virgin Mother, in order to teach us that simplicity and modesty must be sought before everything else. For simplicity belongs naturally to children, whilst modesty is the virtue characteristic of virgins. We may suppose then, that there is no virtue more indispensable for us all at the beginning of our conversion than humble simplicity and modest gravity. In the second manifestation Christ comes to the waters of baptism, not however to be cleansed, but to receive testimony from His Father. These waters, my brethren, represent the tears of devotion wherewith we no longer seek the forgiveness of our faults but only the Father's good pleasure: when there descends upon us "the Spirit of adoption of sons" Who "giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 15, 16); so that we seem to hear the mellifluous voice sounding from heaven and giving assurance to our conscience that God the Father is well pleased with us. There is a vast difference

between such devotional tears, which belong, so to speak, to our spiritual maturity, and those which are shed at the beginning of our spiritual life, accompanied with infantine wailing: I mean the tears of confession and repentance. But far more precious than either are those other tears which are flavoured with the sweetness of wine. For it may be said with truth that the tears of fraternal compassion are changed into wine as they flow forth in the fervour of charity, which soberly inebriating, can sometimes make a man appear forgetful of himself, if only for the space of a single hour.

SERMON FOR THE OCTAVE OF THE EPIPHANY.

On the Reasons why Christ willed to be circumcised and on the Different Degrees of Justice.

"*Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan, unto John, to be baptised by him. But John stayed Him, saying: I ought to be baptised by Thee, and comest Thou to me? And Jesus, answering, said to him: Suffer it to be so now. For so it becometh us to fulfil all justice.*"—Matt. iii. 13-15.

My brethren, for the stiff-necked people the knife was necessary, and stony-hard hearts needed to be pierced with blades of stone, such as those wherewith, as we read, "Jesus the son of Nave" (Ecclus. xlvi. 1) of old circumcised the Hebrews. But our Jesus, like a meek lamb, has put aside all severity. A Lamb Thou art in truth, O Lord, coming to us with wool and milk. Take away from me, then, I beseech Thee, this cruel knife; for it seems a harsh and ruthless thing to use the sharpened stone on a new-born babe. So indeed has He done in His mercy. He has substituted for the hardness which suited hardened slaves, the mildness which is proper to children; so that the rust of original sin which the knife of circumcision could only with difficulty scrape away, shall be easily washed out henceforth with water and the unction of grace. It is indeed nothing wonderful that the remedies for sin should change according to the change of dispensation, and that each era should be offered what suited it best. But Christ submitted Himself to the

remedies of both dispensations * to the end that He might be as the corner-stone which is united to the two walls (Ephes. ii. 14), and that He might connect together, as if with a needle, the ends of the two shoe-lachets (Luke iii. 16). It was in the same way that, after completing the typical Pasch, He immediately instituted the true.

Another reason why He willed to be circumcised was this: in order to show that the Old Testament as well as the New came from Him as its Author. For He Who declared in His own proper Person, "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5), said previously by His Prophet, "The male, whose flesh of his foreskin shall not be circumcised, that soul shall be destroyed out of his people" (Gen. xvii. 14). For had He submitted to baptism alone, He might have appeared to have refused circumcision, as in nowise appertaining to Him. But if, on the contrary, He had accepted circumcision without baptism, how could I be persuaded to prefer baptism to circumcision? As a matter of fact, however, He submitted both to baptism and to circumcision, but to baptism after circumcision, in order that I might be taught to choose what was last administered to Him.

There was yet another reason why the Lord should suffer Himself to be circumcised. How could He Who so dearly loves and so earnestly enjoins community of religious observance, "Who maketh men of one manner to dwell in a house" (Ps. lxvii. 7): how, I ask, could He depart from uniformity and so scandalise others?

* That is to say, the rite of circumcision and the non-sacramental baptism of John.—(Translator.)

For, unquestionably, the neglect of circumcision would have been a cause of scandal to all to whom the fact became known, in the same way as the Church would be scandalised now were a child of Christian parents to be left without baptism. But besides recommending unity and common observance, He wished also to give us an example of humility. Consequently He Who alone was without a wound disdained not the bandages worn by the wounded. Hence it is that the Apostle says of Him, "God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. iv. 4).

But lest someone should say that He was circumcised simply because His parents willed it, He being then only a little Child: therefore, when He had attained His thirtieth year, He came Himself to be baptised in the Jordan, and bowed beneath the hands of John that venerable Head Which the Powers behold with trembling awe, which the Principalities honour with humble adoration. Was it any wonder, my brethren, that the Baptist shook with fear? Oh, how high shall that Head be raised at the judgment Which you now see bent so low! And that Brow Which is here so meek and humble, oh, how glorious and exalted It shall then appear! "Suffer it to be so now," said the Lord, "for so it becometh us to fulfil all justice." Thus fulness characterises all that appertains to Him Who came in the fulness of time (Gal. iv. 4), and in Whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead" (Col. ii. 9). And the law also He came, as He Himself declares, not "to destroy but to fulfil" (Matt. v. 17). There are different degrees of justice, my brethren. The first is extremely rigorous and narrow, so that one step aside means a fall into

the pit of sin: it neither allows us to prefer ourselves to our equals or to compare ourselves to our superiors, and is defined as the virtue which prompts us to render every one his due. The second degree of justice is wider and fuller, going beyond what is of strict obligation and not permitting us to compare ourselves to our equals or to prefer ourselves to our inferiors. For just as it is a proof of great and perilous pride to prefer oneself to one's equals, or to compare oneself with one's superiors, so is it a mark of profound humility to put oneself on a level with one's inferiors and below one's equals. But the fulness and perfection of justice consists in subjecting oneself even to one's inferiors. As it is supreme and insufferable pride for a man to prefer himself to those above him, so, on the contrary, a man shows himself supremely and perfectly just by placing himself below his inferiors. Thus John gave us an instance of the first degree of justice when he said, "I ought to be baptised by Thee," because he subjected himself to his Superior; whereas Christ set us an example of the justice that is full and perfect by stooping beneath the hands of His own poor servant.

Every man should now make up his mind as to whom he shall take for his model, whether the humble Jesus or him "who opposeth and is lifted up above all that is called God or that is worshipped" (2 Thess. ii. 4). But as for ourselves, my brethren, let us, I beseech you, endeavour to imitate the Lord by fulfilling all justice. For that is the way which leads to joy. Joy is the reward, but justice it is that merits joy, yea, it is the very source of joy. I call it the source of joy, because "when Christ shall appear, Who is our Life, and we

also shall appear with Him in glory " (Col. iii. 4), then our joy shall spring from Justice Itself, since He is the Same " Who of God is made unto us Justice," as the Apostle speaks (1 Cor. i. 30). But blessed are they who even now make justice the source of their joy, and are cheered by the testimony of their own conscience, " sucking honey out of the rock and oil out of the hardest stone " (Deut. xxxii. 13). At present, indeed, justice appears to involve much pain and labour. The time will come, however, when it shall be desired and possessed, loved and acquired, with all sweetness and gladness, without any toil or trouble, when, namely, it shall be given us to enjoy Justice in its pnrity. But alas for those who wander out of the way, for those who, renouncing the joy of justice, pursue a joy that is transitory and vain ! For since they place their joy in transitory things, that joy must pass away with the passing of the things which are its source. Just as the fire goes out when the fuel fails, so undoubtedly shall all earthly joys vanish when this " world passeth away and the concupiscence thereof " (1 John ii. 17).

FIRST SERMON FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE OCTAVE OF THE EPIPHANY.

On the Six Spiritual Water-Pots and the Measures they contain.

"And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the Mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and His disciples, to the wedding. And the wine failing, the Mother of Jesus saith to Him: They have no wine. And Jesus saith to her: Woman, what is it to Me and to thee? My hour is not yet come. His Mother saith to the waiters: Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye. Now there were set there six water-pots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three measures apiece. Jesus saith to them: Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim."—John ii. 1-7.

In the Gospel lesson just recited, my brethren, we are told that Our Lord has gone to a marriage feast. Let us, consequently, do that which He recommends in another passage, and endeavour to make ourselves "like to men who wait for their Lord, when He shall return from the wedding" (Luke xii. 36). When you see a man in the field with his hand to the plough, when you see another in the market-place buying or selling, you never think of asking them what they are waiting for, because they are not "like to men who wait." But if you observed one standing before a door, repeatedly knocking and often raising his eyes to the windows, it would be only natural to inquire what was he waiting for. Those, therefore, "are like to men who wait," those, I mean, who have not turned a deaf ear to the words of the Lord, "Be still and see that I am God" (Ps. xlv. 11). For the Lord will come to

them that await Him in truth, as did he who has said, "With expectation I have waited for the Lord" (Ps. xxxix. 1). He will come, I say, to such as wait for Him, like one returning from a wedding, inebriated with the wine of charity and forgetful of their sins. He will also come to them who do *not* await Him, and still as one returning from a wedding, but "like a mighty man that hath been surfeited with wine," the wine of wrath. Yes, He will come to them inebriated and forgetful not of their sins, but of His mercies. For with regard to such, "God will forget to show mercy" (Ps. lxxvi. 10) then. He will come to them in His anger and indignation, like a man enraged to fury. "O Lord, rebuke me not in Thy indignation, nor chastise me in Thy fury" (Ps. vi. 2).

Of the foregoing remarks the wedding in Cana of Galilee has been rather the occasion than the subject. But let us now with the disciples follow the Lord to this wedding, so that with them we may see what He is about to do and may consequently believe in Him (John ii. 11). "The wine failing, the Mother of Jesus saith to Him: They have no wine." She observed the embarrassment of the good people of the house and pitied them, merciful as she always is and full of tenderest charity. What indeed save mercy could issue from mercy's source? Is it any wonder, I ask, if the very bowels of mercy should appear to be merciful? Does not the hand which has held an apple for half a day preserve the odour of the apple for the remainder of the day? How redolent of mercy, then, must not that bosom have been wherein Piety Itself was lodged for the space of nine months! Yea, and It occupied the Virgin's mind before It entered

her bosom, nor when issuing from her womb did It retire from her heart. As to the Lord's reply to His Mother, we may think it sounds harsh and austere. But He knew to whom He was speaking, and she was not ignorant Who He was That spoke. And that you may understand in what manner she received His response, and how much she could presume on the goodness of her Son, she immediately "saith to the waiters: Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye."

"Now there were set there six water-pots of stone." I have next, my brethren, to set these water-pots, or rather to show that they are already set for the purification of the true Israelites, those, namely, who are Jews, not according to the letter but according to the spirit. For inasmuch as the Church has not yet attained to that perfect purity, when Christ shall "present her to Himself, a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Ephes. v. 27); she has still need of many purifications, so that where sin abounds, forgiveness may likewise abound (Rom. v. 20), and that where miseries are multiplied, mercies may be multiplied also. "But not as the offence, so also the gift" (Rom. v. 15). For grace not only washes out sin, but it also bestows merit. Consequently there are six water-pots set for the purification of those who relapse into sin after the reception of baptism: it is of such I speak, because such we are ourselves. We put off our old garment, but alas! we have put it on again (Cant. v. 3), and so made our last state worse than the first (Matt. xii. 43). We washed our feet, but have defiled them again and with a defilement worse than the former. As, then, the defilement caused in us by another, viz., Adam, has been cleansed from

us by Another, viz., Christ : so is it necessary that the defilement caused by ourselves should be cleansed by ourselves. We were washed with borrowed water when we had been defiled with foreign guilt. I would not, however, represent that guilt as foreign to us in such a sense as that I should deny it to have been truly ours. For were it not our guilt, it certainly could not have defiled us. It was at once both foreign and domestic : foreign, because in Adam we all sinned unwittingly ; domestic, because, although not in our own but in the person of another, we sinned nevertheless, and that sin has been imputed to us by the just, yet secret judgment of God. But now, O man, that thou mayest have no longer any reason to complain, behold, to make amends for the disobedience of Adam, thou art offered the obedience of Christ ; so that, if thou wert sold into slavery without fault of thine, without merit of thine thou art now delivered : if without thy knowledge thou didst perish in Adam, without thy knowledge also hast thou been reanimated in Christ. Thou wert unconscious when the ancient Adam stretched forth his guilty hands towards the forbidden tree ; and when Christ stretched out His innocent Hands upon the tree of life thou wert equally unconscious. From the first man was transmitted the stain which defiled thee ; from Christ's Side flowed the water which washed thee from that stain. But now, being defiled with thine own personal guilt, thou must be cleansed likewise with waters of thine own, by Him, nevertheless, and through Him Who alone "maketh purgation of sins" (Heb. i. 3).

The first water-pot, therefore, and the first purification consists in compunction, whereof it is written,

"In whatsoever hour the sinner shall repent, I will not remember all his iniquities which he hath done" (Ezech. xviii. 21, 22). The second is confession, for all things are washed clean in confession. Almsgiving is another water-pot. Hence we read in the Gospel, "Give alms, and behold all things are clean to you" (Luke xi. 41). The next is the forgiveness of injuries, according to the words of the Lord's Prayer, "forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors" (Matt. vi. 12). The fifth of our water-pots is mortification of the flesh; so we pray in the divine office that:—

> "Cleansed by fasting we may sing
> The glories of our God and King." *

The sixth and last is obedience to the divine commands. Thus it was said to the disciples—and would to God we could hear the same addressed to ourselves!—"Now you are clean by reason of the word which I have spoken to you" (John xv. 3). For they were not like the Jews who were told by the Saviour that His word hath no place in them (John viii. 37). On the contrary, they had always fulfilled His word with the most prompt obedience. These, then, are the six water-pots set for our purification, which, however, remain empty or are only filled with air, if used from a motive of vainglory. But whenever we approach them from the fear of God we shall find them filled with cleansing water, because the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life. Yea, the fear of the Lord is truly water, not very sweet, I grant, but very refreshing,

* "Mundi per abstinentiam
Ipsi canamus gloriam."

From the hymn for the Office of Prime.—(Translator.)

particularly to the soul that is aflame with carnal desires. It is a kind of water that is "able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one" (Ephes. vi. 16). Another point of resemblance is this: that as water seeks the lowest level, so does the fear of God lead our thoughts down to the profoundest depths: it abides in the nether regions, and forces the terrified soul to contemplate the horrors of the abyss, according to what is written, "In the midst of my days I shall go to the gates of hell" (Is. xxxviii. 10). But by the power of God that water shall at length be changed into wine, for "perfect charity casteth out fear" (1 John iv. 18).

The water-pots are said to be of stone, not so much on account of their hardness as in order to indicate their durability. They are also described as "containing two or three measures apiece." The two measures correspond to two fears, the fear of being thrust down into hell, and the fear of being excluded from eternal life. But because both these belong to the uncertain future, and the soul may flatter herself with false hope, speaking to herself in this wise: "After thou hast lived awhile in pleasures, thou canst do penance, and so shalt avoid the loss of heaven and escape the torments of hell": therefore it is well to add a third fear which spiritual persons are acquainted with, and which is all the more efficacious for that it concerns the present time. They who have learned to relish spiritual food are afraid lest they should perchance be deprived of it. For strong meat is necessary for him who "hath put out his hand to strong things" (Prov. xxxi. 19). Let them that serve "in works of brick and clay" (Exod. i. 14) live upon the chaff of

Egypt ; but as for us, we, my brethren, require a more sustaining food, because we "have yet a great way to go," and must "walk in the strength of that food" (3 Kings xix. 7, 8). It is the "bread of angels" (Ps. lxxvii. 25), the "living bread" (John vi. 41), "our daily bread" (Matt. vi. 11). This bread is indeed that hundred-fold which it is promised us that we shall receive in the present life. For just as food is daily furnished to hired servants, even whilst they are occupied with their work, and their wages kept back until the work is completed : so does the Lord deal with us, promising and bestowing a hundred-fold of consolation in this world, and waiting to reward us with eternal life in the world to come. What wonder, then, if he who has already received so great a grace should fear to lose it ? This fear, as I have said, is the third measure, to which the Evangelist on purpose refers disjunctively, because it belongs not to all. For neither is the hundred-fold promised to all, but only to those who for Christ's sake have left all things (Matt. xix. 29).

SECOND SERMON FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE OCTAVE OF THE EPIPHANY.

On the Spiritual Espousals and the Spiritual Marriage.

"*And the wine failing, the Mother of Jesus saith to Him : They have no wine. And Jesus saith to her : Woman, what is it to Me and to thee? My hour is not yet come. His Mother saith to the waiters : Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye. Now there were set there six water-pots of stone, according to the manner of purifying of the Jews, containing two or three measures apiece. Jesus saith to them : Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.*"—John ii. 3-7.

With regard to the works of the Lord, my brethren, less penetrating minds can find nourishment in the contemplation of their exterior, whilst souls with faculties better developed by exercise discover beneath the surface a sweeter and more solid food, as it were, the fat and marrow of the grain. For even in their external show the works of Jesus are a source of delight, but a far greater source of delight in their intrinsic virtue : just as He is Himself "beautiful in form above the sons of men" (Ps. xliv. 3) even outwardly, whilst within He is the "Brightness of Eternal Light" (Wisdom vii. 26), dazzling to the eyes of the very angels. Outwardly He appears to be a Man without offence, Flesh without sin, a Lamb without spot. Oh, "how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him That bringeth good tidings and That preacheth peace!" (Is. lii. 7.) But greater beyond comparison is the beauty and the glory of His Head, since "the

Head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. ii. 3). It is doubtless a delight to behold a Man to Whom sin has no access, and blessed are the eyes so privileged: but much more "blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. v. 8). Thus when the Apostle had penetrated to the kernel, he no longer regarded the shell, exceedingly beautiful though it was; for he said, "And if we have known Christ according to the flesh, but now we know Him so no longer" (2 Cor. v. 16). This was in accordance with the prediction of the Lord Himself, Who had declared, "It is the Spirit That quickeneth; the Flesh profiteth nothing" (John vi. 64). And it is that wisdom which St. Paul spoke "among the perfect" (1 Cor. ii. 6), not among those to whom, as we read, he spoke in this wise, "I judged not myself to know anything among you but Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (ibid. 2). Everything, in truth, about Jesus is sweet, everything wholesome, everything delectable, for "He is all lovely," according to the testimony of the Spouse in the Canticle (Cant. v. 16).

Now what I have shown to be true of Himself, you will find to be equally true of His works. For considered externally, in their outer surface, they appear to be surpassingly beautiful. But if one breaks the shell, so to speak, he will discover within what is far more sweet and delectable. You will not find it so with the events recorded in the histories of the fathers of the Old Dispensation. For although the mystical significance of their actions is always beautiful and pleasing, these actions, nevertheless, if viewed in themselves, will be sometimes found unworthy, as, for instance, Jacob's deception of his father (Gen. xxvii.), and the crimes of King David (2 Kings xi.). The food

offered us here is exceedingly precious, although the dishes wherein it is served are vile enough. And perhaps it was with reference to such actions of the patriarchs the Prophet sang, "Dark are the waters in the clouds of the air" (Ps. xvii. 12), because they were indeed dark clouds. But he added immediately, speaking of the Lord, "At the brightness that was before Him, the clouds passed away" (ibid. 13).

I think you have guessed my purpose in making these observations. For you have heard to-day of the miracle wrought at the marriage feast, the first of the Lord's miracles, the history whereof is as admirable as its mystical signification is consoling. It was beyond doubt a splendid proof of Christ's Divinity that at His word water was changed into wine. But more wonderful still is the "change of the right hand of the Most High" (Ps. lxxvi. 11) which that transformation typified. For we are all invited to the spiritual nuptials in which Christ Our Lord is the Bridegroom. Hence we sing in the psalm, "And He as a bridegroom coming out of his bride-chamber" (Ps. xviii. 6). And the Bride? We ourselves, my brethren, are the Bride, incredible though it may seem to you; we are all, collectively, one same Bride of the one Christ, and, moreover, our several souls are, so to speak, several Brides. But when shall our fragility be able to believe this of our Lord God, that He loves us each and all as tenderly as a bride is loved by her bridegroom? For in our case the Bride is far inferior to the Bridegroom, inferior in nature, inferior in beauty, inferior in dignity. Nevertheless, for the sake of this Ethiopian Bride the Son of the Eternal Father came down hither from afar; and in order to

espouse her to Himself, He hesitated not to die for her redemption. Moses indeed took an Ethiopian woman to wife (Exod. ii. 21), but he was not able to alter her colour; whereas the Bride loved and wedded by Christ whilst as yet mean and ugly, He will hereafter "present to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Ephes. v. 27). What though Aaron should complain? What though Mary too should murmur? I do not mean the new Mary, but the old; not the Lord's Mother, but the sister of Moses (Num. xii. 1). Not our own Mary, I repeat, for she is rather solicitous lest anything should be lacking at the wedding-feast. But whilst the priests and the Synagogue murmur and complain, do you, my brethren, as is only right, devote yourselves to thanking God with all your heart for the singular favour He has shown you in choosing you for His Spouse.

For whence is this to thee, O human soul, whence is this to thee? To what dost thou owe a glory so inestimable as to be accounted worthy to become the Bride of Him "on Whom the angels desire to look" (1 Peter i. 12)? How hast thou merited to have Him for thy Bridegroom at Whose loveliness the sun and moon stand amazed, Whose commands change the course of the universe? Oh, "what shalt thou render to the Lord for all the things which He hath rendered to thee?" (Ps. cxv. 3). For He hath made thee the partner of His table, the partner of His throne, the partner of His couch, yea, the King hath brought thee into His bed-chamber. See now what sentiments thou oughtest to entertain of thy God; see now how far thou mayest presume with Him; see now with what arms of vicarious charity, with what reciprocated

affection, thou oughtest to embrace Him Who hath esteemed thee so highly, nay rather Who hath made thee worthy to be so highly esteemed. For He formed thee anew from His own Side when for thy sake He slept upon the cross, when He suffered the sleep of death to overpower Him (Gen. ii. 21). For thy sake "He came forth from God," His Father (John xiii. 3), and left the Synagogue, His mother, that so thou mightest cleave to Him and be made one spirit with Him (Gen. ii. 24, 1 Cor. vi. 17). Therefore, "Hearken, O daughter, and see" (Ps. xliv. 11), and consider how great has been the divine condescension towards thee. "Forget thy people and thy father's house" (ibid.), that is to say, renounce thy carnal affections, unlearn the manners and customs of the world, abstain from thy former sins, banish the memory of thy vicious habits. What thinkest thou? Would it be anything surprising to hear that "the angel of the Lord waiteth with a sword to cut thee in two" (Dan. xiii. 59), if—which God forbid!—thou shouldst ever admit any lover besides Himself?

For already thou hast been espoused to Him, the marriage breakfast has even now begun, and the marriage supper is being prepared in heaven, in the eternal hall above. Is there any cause to fear lest the wine shall fail at that wedding feast? God forbid! For there, as the Psalmist said, speaking to the Lord, "They shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure" (Ps. xxxv. 9). Oh, yes: a whole river of wine is prepared for that wedding supper, and of the wine which "cheereth the heart of man" (Ps. ciii. 15). For "the stream of the river maketh the

city of God joyful" (Ps. xlv. 5). But in the meantime, inasmuch as we "have yet a great way to go" (3 Kings xix. 7), we are here below provided with breakfast, not unto satiety however, because satiety and fulness are reserved for the everlasting supper. Here, therefore, the wine may sometimes fail, that is to say, the grace of devotion may be lost and the fervour of charity grow lukewarm. How often, my brethren, after listening to your tearful complaints, am I not obliged to beseech the Mother of mercy to represent to her most gracious Son that you have no wine! And I say to you, dearest children, if we devoutly call upon her, she will not be wanting to our necessity, because she is merciful and the Mother of mercy. For if she pitied the embarrassment of those that invited her to an earthly feast, much more will she have compassion on us, if only we invoke her with affection: because these nuptials of ours are more a cause of pleasure and concern to the Mother of Jesus than were those of Cana of Galilee, since it is from her womb as from His bridal chamber our heavenly Bridegroom has issued.

But, my brethren, which of us can help feeling painfully surprised at the answer given by the Lord at that wedding feast to His own most sweet and holy Mother: "Woman, what is there in common between Me and thee?" Dost Thou ask, Lord, what there is in common between Thee and the Virgin? Is not all that in common between you which is common to a child and his mother? Dost Thou inquire in what manner Thou art related to her of whose immaculate womb Thou art the blessed Fruit? (Luke i. 42). Is not she the same who conceived Thee without detri-

ment to her virginity, and brought Thee forth, remaining still a virgin inviolate? Is not she the same in whose womb Thou didst dwell for nine long months, at whose virginal breast Thou wast suckled, with whom, when Thou wast twelve years of age, Thou didst descend from Jerusalem, and wast subject to her? (Luke ii. 31). Now, therefore, O Lord, why art Thou troublesome to her, saying, "Woman, what is there in common between Me and thee?" Surely there is "much every way" (Rom. iii. 2). But I now understand clearly that it was not as it were through anger, or with any desire to confound the tender modesty of Thy Virgin Mother, Thou didst say to her, "Woman, what is there in common between Me and Thee?" For when the waiters came to Thee, according to Thy Mother's instructions, Thou didst without delay that which she had suggested. Why, then, my brethren, did He first make her so strange an answer? It was doubtless for our instruction, to teach us that, after our conversion to the Lord, we should not allow ourselves to be seduced by solicitude for our parents according to the flesh, or to be distracted from our spiritual exercises by their temporal necessities. So long as we lived in the world, we were undoubtedly under obligations to our parents; but when we renounced ourselves, we likewise, and much more, disengaged ourselves from all undue solicitude with regard to them. Hence the story told of a certain monk who lived in a desert solitude. Being visited one day by his brother according to the flesh, who came to solicit assistance, he told him to apply to their other brother who had died long before. "But he is dead," cried the visitor in amazement. "Not more dead than am I," answered

the hermit.* Therefore, my brethren, it was in order to make us clearly understand that we should not be more solicitous for our earthly relatives than religion requires: it was with this design, I say, that He said to His own Mother, and to such a Mother, "Woman, what is there in common between Me and thee?" So, again, on another occasion, when informed by someone that she with His brethren were standing without, desiring to speak to Him, He replied, "Who is My mother and who are My brethren?" (Matt. xii. 48). Where now are those religious who are accustomed to have as much vain and worldly concern for their carnal relations as if they still lived amongst them?

But let us proceed to examine what follows. "Now there were set there," says the Evangelist, "six water-pots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews." From these words alone we can plainly see that the fulness is not yet, but only the preparation for the wedding feast, because, namely, there is still need of purification. Therefore, that which is here described for us is not the marriage festivities at all but only the espousals. God forbid that any one should expect to see vessels of purification at the final nuptials, when Christ shall "present to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing" (Ephes. v. 27). For what need shall there be for purification where no spot shall be visible? Now

* So we read in the life of St. Apollo whose memory is celebrated on January 25th. St. Bernard does not mean that religious persons ought to have less love than others for their relatives—his twenty-sixth Sermon on the Canticle of Canticles bears eloquent testimony to the tenderness of his own natural affections—but only that no earthly solicitudes should be allowed to distract their attention from the things of God. Cf. *Sermons on the Canticle of Canticles*, vol. i. p. 283, note, (Mt. Melleray Translation).—(Translator.)

is the time for cleansing, now purifications are manifestly necessary, when no man is free from stain, not even the infant who has lived one day upon the earth.* At present, therefore, the Spouse is being cleansed, at present she is being purified, in order that, when the time comes for the celestial nuptials, she may be presented immaculate to her heavenly Bridegroom. Let us consequently look about for the six water-pots which are intended to serve for the purification of the Jews, that is to say, for the cleansing of them that confess their faults. For if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (1 John i. 8)—the truth which alone can deliver us, which alone can save us, which alone can make us clean. But if we confess our sins, like true Jews,† then the water-pots shall not be lacking for our purification, because God is "faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all our iniquity" (ibid. 9).

It seems to me, my brethren, that by the six water-pots we are to understand six observances instituted by the holy fathers for purifying the hearts of those who confess their sins; and, if I mistake not, all the six can be found in this very monastery. Thus, the first of the spiritual water-pots is the practice of continence, whereby we wash away the stains contracted

* "Nec infans unius diei sine sorde est super terram." This appears to be a free translation of Job xiv. 4, 5, according to the Greek: "*τίς γὰρ καταρὸς ἔσται ἀπὸ ῥύπου; αλλ' οὐθεὶς, ἐὰν καὶ μία ἡμέρα ὁ βίος αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.* The Vulgate has: "quis potest mundum facere de immundo conceptum semine? Nonne Tu qui solus es?" In St. Augustine (*Conf.* i. vii.) we find the following: "Nemo mundus a peccato, nec infans cujus est unius diei vita super terram," which hardly differs from St. Bernard's reading.—(Translator.)

† Cf. vol. i. of present series, p. 374, note.

from sensual indulgence in the past. The second is fasting, for we employ abstinence from food as a means of cleansing what gluttony has defiled. By sloth also and by idleness, which is the enemy of the soul (Holy Rule of St. Benedict, c. xlviii.), we have contracted much defilement, eating our bread, not, as the Lord has commanded, in the sweat of our own brow (Gen. iii. 19) but in the sweat of our neighbour's. We have therefore a third water-pot placed before us in manual labour, by which we can wash ourselves clean from the stains of sloth. Again, we have committed many sins through somnolency and the other works of the night and darkness. Hence there is another water-pot set before us, namely, the observance of regular vigils, whereby we rise in the night to confess to the Lord, and to redeem the many nights we may have spent in evil. But concerning the tongue, who does not know how much defilement we have each of us contracted from it through idle and untruthful words, through detraction and flattery, through malicious and boastful speeches? A fifth water-pot is plainly needed to cleanse us from this, and we have it in the observance of silence, which is the guardian of religious life and the source of our spiritual strength. The sixth water-pot is regular discipline, by which we no longer live according to our own will, but with dependence upon the will of another, in order to purify ourselves from the effects of our former license. These water-pots are stony in their hardness, nevertheless we have no choice but to wash in them, that is, unless we desire to receive a bill of divorce from the Lord because of our filthiness (Deut. xxiv. 1). However, it is not merely to indicate their hardness that they are

described as of stone, but also and more particularly to signify their durability ; for unless they continue firm and stable, they cannot render us pure.

Jesus then said to the waiters, " Fill the water-pots with water." What means this, O Lord ? The waiters are troubled because the wine has failed, and dost Thou say to them, " Fill the water-pots with water ? " They are thinking of the banqueting cups, and dost Thou order them to fill the vessels set for purification ? It was thus, my brethren, it was thus that of old, when Jacob was longing to embrace his dear Rachel, Lia, her sister, was secretly put in her place by their father, Laban (Gen. xxix. 22-24). We superiors are the waiters and the servants of the brotherhood ; and whenever the wine happens to fail, we are commanded by Christ to fill for you the water-pots. It is as if the Lord should say to us : " The brethren desire devotion, they want wine, they are asking for fervour ; but My hour is not yet come : fill the water-pots with water." For what is the water of wisdom, very salutary, but not too sweet, unless it be the fear of the Lord which is the fountain of life and the beginning of wisdom (Ps. cx. 10) ? Therefore, the order is given to the waiters : " Inspire them with wholesome fear ; fill the vessels of their hearts with the spirit of fear, because they must begin with fear if they desire to attain to charity, so that they also may be able to say with the Prophet, ' By Thy fear, O Lord, we have conceived and have brought forth the spirit of salvation ' (Is. xxvi. 18)." *

* " A timore tuo concepimus, Domine, et parturivimus spiritum salutis." This translates the Greek : " *Διὰ τὸν φόβον σου, κύριε, ἐν γαστρὶ ἐλαβομεν . . . καὶ ἐτέκομεν πνεῦμα σωτηρίας*" —except that the common punctuation puts a period after *ἐτέκομεν*. The Vulgate is entirely different : " Concepimus et quasi parturivimus et peperimus spiritum. Salutes non fecimus."—(Translator.)

But how are the water-pots to be filled? For the Evangelist has told us that they contain "two or three measures apiece." What are we to understand by these two or three measures? Well, there are two kinds of fear common enough and familiar to all, and a third less common and less known. The first kind of fear is the fear of being condemned to the torments of hell; the second is the fear of being excluded from the vision of God and deprived of so inestimable a glory; the third inspires the soul with the most anxious solicitude lest she should ever deserve to be abandoned by grace.

It is true, my brethren, that every species of the fear of the Lord extinguishes sinful concupiscence, even as water extinguishes fire. But this is especially the case with the last-mentioned fear, since it opposes itself to the first beginning of every temptation in order to prevent the loss of grace: the result of which loss would be that a man, left entirely to his own, resources, would fall daily lower and lower, from one grade of guilt to a deeper. So do we see many who being filthy, go on from day to day, growing filthier still (Apoc. xxii. 11). For in the face of this fear, the soul cannot flatter herself either with the thought that the sin is not very grievous, or with the hope of repenting later on. Such self-deception is wont to hinder the effect of the two other kinds of fear, at least to some extent. Therefore the Lord commands us to fill the water-pots with the water of these various species of fear. For the water-pots are sometimes empty or only filled with air. This happens whenever a man becomes so insane as to allow the love of vanity to render void of their eternal reward those observances

whereof I have been speaking—which was the case with the foolish virgins whose vessels were found empty of oil (Matt. xxv). Sometimes too—and this is worse—the water-pots are full indeed, but only full of poison, that is to say, full of envy, of murmuring, of rancour, of detraction. Therefore, to prevent such things from entering the vessels when the wine happens to fail, we are told to fill them with water ; so that in the meantime, until fervour revives, the commandments of the Lord may be obeyed in fear. But this water shall be changed into wine when fear is cast out by perfect love (1 John iv. 18), and then all the vessels shall be filled up to the brim with spiritual fervour and joyous devotion.

FIRST SERMON FOR SEPTUAGESIMA.

On how we should listen to the Word of God and on the Spiritual Septuagesima.

"*He that is of God, heareth the words of God.*"—John viii. 47.

This saying of the Lord, my brethren, affords me great consolation. For it assures me that the reason why you listen so gladly to the words of God is because you are of God. I am not unaware that the Scripture tells us in another passage that "of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things" (Rom. xi. 36). But in a far different manner from His other creatures are they of God who, according to the Gospel of St. John, "are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 13). Hence you will also find the same Apostle bearing testimony in his first epistle that "whosoever is born of God sinneth not, but the generation of God preserveth him" (1 John v. 18). "He sinneth not," that is to say, he does not remain in sin, because "the heavenly generation (which cannot be deceived) preserveth him," so that it is impossible for him to perish. Or perhaps the words, "He sinneth not," are to be understood as signifying that such a one shall be as if he had no sin, because, namely, his sins shall not be imputed to him, forasmuch as, in this respect also, "the generation of

God preserveth him." * But "who shall declare (this) generation?" (Is. liii. 8). Which of us can say, "I belong to the elect, I am one of those predestinated to life, I am of the number of God's children"? Where, I ask, is the man who can say this, in the face of the inspired utterance, "Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred" (Eccles. ix. 1)? No, absolute certitude we cannot have. But still we may find comfort in the confidence of hope, lest otherwise the anxiety occasioned by this doubt should become an insufferable torment. Accordingly, we are given certain signs and manifest indications of salvation, such that, in whomsoever they continue, they make it practically indubitable that he is of the number of the elect. For this reason, I say, "whom God foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son" (Rom. viii. 29), in order to give at least the consolation of hope to them from whom—lest they

* There are two erroneous theories of justification which might seem to have some support in what is said here: the Lutheran, that the grace of justification consists in the non-imputation of sin which continues to abide in the soul; and the Calvinistic, that justification once conferred can never be lost. But the holy Doctor plainly teaches the contrary of both these errors in different places of his works. Thus against the first, he says, (*De Consid.* v. 4), "There we shall behold how the fire of His charity *consumes* in His elect the sins of their youth and the chaff of their ignorances, and thus renders them entirely pure and most worthy of His love"; and commenting on 1 John v. 18 (*De Gratia et Lib. Arb.*) he writes, "These words appertain to such as are predestined to eternal life, not that they are altogether free from sin, but because their sins are not imputed to them, as having been *expiated by congruous penance* or covered, viz., blotted out by charity." And how little he was in sympathy with Calvin's doctrine he shows clearly enough, where he says (*De Offic. Epis.* IV.), "Some withdraw from the faith, since Truth has said so, and consequently *from salvation* because they are reproved by the Saviour, hence we may conclude that they withdraw likewise *from charity* without which salvation is impossible."—(Translator.)

should grow less solicitous—He withholds the assurance of certainty. Hence it is that we are kept always in a state of anxiety, and in fear and trembling have to humble ourselves " under the mighty hand of God " (1 Peter v. 6). For whereas we can know, at least in part, what kind we are now, what we shall become hereafter it is entirely beyond our power to discern. " Wherefore, he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall " (1 Cor. x. 12) ; and let him continue steadfast, yea and make progress in that manner of life which is a sign of salvation and an evidence of predestination.

Now amongst all the indications which minister to our confidence and furnish a solid basis for hope, the most important is that of which I have already begun to speak, viz., " He that is of God, heareth the words of God." You will occasionally meet with persons who listen to the words of God as to something which does not concern them particularly. They neither enter into their hearts, nor examine their consciences, nor consider lest perchance that which they hear is being said for their own amendment. On the contrary, if the " living and effectual word of God " (Heb. iv. 12) which goes whithersoever it pleases, guided by its own instinct, not at all by the will of the preacher : if, I say, that divine word is manifestly directed against those vices wherewith they know themselves to be infected, they will try to dissemble, they will turn away the eyes of their heart, they will varnish their faults with some idle pretence, and have recourse to some pitiful self-delusion. In such as these, therefore, I do not see the signs of predestination ; but I am rather afraid lest the reason why they do not hear

the words of God should be this, because they are not of God. But in you, my brethren,—and God be thanked for it—I do indeed find " ears to hear " (Matt. xi. 15), since the fruit of the word becomes immediately apparent in the amendment of your lives; yea, and sometimes even during the sermon it seems to me that I can actually feel the burning fervour of your hearts. For the more plentifully you suck out the milk of the word, the more abundantly does the Holy Spirit replenish my breasts; and the more speedily you swallow down what is offered, the more copious the supplies given to me for your nourishment. This is the reason why I preach to you more frequently than is the custom in our Order. For I know by Whom it has been said, " Whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at My return will repay thee " (Luke x. 35).

To-day, my brethren, we celebrate the beginning of the season of Septuagesima, the name of which at least is familiar to all Catholics. But I confess to you, dearest children, that the very sound of this name excites in my soul a deep feeling of self-commiseration. For my spirit is troubled within me, and is filled with yearning desires for that homeland which knows neither number, weight, nor measure. Oh, how long must I receive all the goods, both of soul and body, in measure and number and weight? " How many hired servants in my Father's house abound with bread, and I here perish with hunger! " (Luke xv. 17). For as concerns the food of the body, it was said to Adam,—and the sentence has been extended to me,— " In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat bread " (Gen. iii. 19). But even when I labour, bread is only

given me in weight, water in measure, and the fruits of the earth in number. Such is my condition with regard to corporeal food. But what provision has been made for my spiritual sustenance? Alas! I must sigh before eating; and would to God that after my sighs and my tears I may be found worthy to receive even so much as a small crust from the heavenly banquet-board, and that, like a whelp, I may be allowed to "eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of my masters" (Matt. xv. 27)! O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, "city of the great King" (Ps. xlvii. 3), "Who filleth thee with the fat of corn" (Ps. cxlvii. 3), and maketh thee "joyful with the stream of the river" (Ps. xlv. 5)! In thee there is neither measure nor weight, but perfect satiety and overflowing abundance. Neither is number to be found in thee that art "built as a city which is compacted together" (Ps. cxxi. 3). Oh, when shall I attain to that unity I so long for, I who am nothing but number and change? When, O Lord, when shall I be satisfied and Thy glory appear? (Ps. xvi. 15). When shall I be "inebriated with the plenty of Thy house," and be made to "drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure" (Ps. xxxv. 9)? "For at present the drops that fall thence upon the earth (Ps. lxxi. 6) are so extremely small that I have not even the power "to swallow down my spittle" (Job vii. 19).

So it is, my brethren, so in truth it is. Here below nothing is given us but in number, weight, and measure. The time will come, however, when all this shall be changed, that is, when we shall be admitted into the kingdom of God. For with regard to number, we read that "of His wisdom there is no number"

(Ps. cxlvi. 5). And in another psalm the same Prophet says, speaking to the Lord, "At Thy right hand are delights even to the end" (Ps. xv. 11), that is, without number. Listen now to the Apostle telling us of a weight without weight: "That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation," says he, "worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. iv. 17). Notice how he describes the weight as eternal; and mark also how he has previously represented it as "above measure." So too I hear Christ promising us a measure without measure: "good measure and pressed down and shaken together and running over" (Luke vi. 38). But when shall these things be? Doubtless at the end of our present Septuagesima, which is the time of our captivity. For so we read that the children of Israel, made captive by the Babylonians, had seventy years appointed them as the period of their exile; at the expiration of which, returning home, they restored the temple and rebuilt the holy city (Je xxv., xxix.; Books 1 and 2 Esdras). But when shall our captivity come to an end, which has continued now so many years, even from the beginning of the world? When shall we be delivered from this servitude? When shall the spiritual Jerusalem, the true holy city, be renewed? Not until the completion of this Septuagesima, which is composed of the number ten multiplied by seven, representing the ten commandments we have received from God and the seven obstacles which impede our observance of those commandments.

The necessities of the body—a heavy care—constitute the first of these obstacles. For it admits of no doubt that the wretched body, by its manifold wants, demand

ing at one time sleep, at another food, clothing now, and then something else, hinders us often from applying ourselves to spiritual things. The second obstacle comes from the vices of the heart, such as levity, suspiciousness, the feelings of impatience and envy, the desire for praise, and similar inordinate motions which we daily experience in ourselves. In temporal prosperity and adversity we have the third and fourth obstacles. "For the corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth upon many things" (Wisdom ix. 15). On both sides, consequently, we require to be on our guard against the snares of temptation, and have need of the "armour of justice on the right hand and on the left" (2 Cor. vi. 7). The fifth obstacle arises from our ignorance, and this is the most serious and the most perilous of all. For in many things we are quite uncertain as to what we ought to do, yea, "we know not what we should pray for as we ought" (Rom. viii. 26). Then there is our "adversary the devil, who goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter v. 8), and he is the sixth impediment. But would to God we had no other tribulation to endure besides these six, that there were no seventh evil to assail us, no danger to be apprehended from false brethren! Would to God the suggestions of the malignant spirits were the only assaults we had to encounter, and that we were exposed to no peril from the pernicious example of men, from their importunate solicitations, from their flattery and detracting speeches, and from their various other means of doing us harm! You see, therefore, my brethren, what need we have to be supported by the assistance of the Sevenfold

Spirit against the seven perils which beset us in the path of salvation. And it is on account of these seven obstacles in the way of obedience to the ten commandments of the divine law that the present Septuagesima is passed in penitential mourning. Hence, the solemn alleluia is suppressed during this time and the wretched history of human transgression is recounted from the beginning.*

* In the Liturgy, that is.

SECOND SERMON FOR SEPTUAGESIMA.

On the Sleep of Adam.

" Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam ; and when he was fast asleep, He took one of his ribs and built up flesh for it.
" And the Lord God built the rib which He took from Adam into a woman, and brought her to Adam.
" And Adam said : This now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh ; she shall be called a woman, because she was taken out of a man.
" Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife : and they shall be two in one flesh."—Gen. ii. 21-24.

" Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam." Yes, my brethren, and He also cast a deep sleep upon Himself, that is, after becoming the second Adam. But there is a great difference between the one sleep and the other. For whereas our first father seems to have slept from an excess of contemplation, it was rather an excess of compassion that caused the slumber in the case of Christ. Hence we may say that truth cast the sleep upon the first Adam and charity upon the second, although the same Lord is both charity and truth. Does not St. John the Evangelist bear witness that " God is charity " (1 John iv. 16) ? And the Lord Himself says, " I am the way, and the truth, and the life " (John xiv. 6). That the sleep of Christ upon the cross was caused by charity, can be doubted by no one who is a Christian even in name. For " He lay down as a lion " (Numb. xxiv. 9), not surely as vanquished but as victor, of His own power laying down His life, and of His own will submitting to death

(John x. 17). But what kind of sleep must we suppose that to have been which "the Lord cast upon Adam," in which, without the least sense of pain, a rib was taken from the sleeper's side to be formed into a woman? It seems to me that this slumber of Adam resulted from the contemplation of the immutable Truth and the abyss of Divine Wisdom which suspended the activities of the bodily senses. So much, I think, may be gathered from his words on awakening. For after his return he indicated whither he had gone: when, as one inebriated, coming forth from the wine-cellar (Cant. ii. 4), he published that great mystery which the Apostle commended so many centuries later in Christ and the Church, crying out, "This now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. . . . Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh" (Gen. ii. 23, 24; Ephes. v. 31, 32). Does it seem to you, my brethren, that he had been buried in unconscious slumber who, on awakening, broke out immediately into such a speech? Is it not more likely that he could have said in the words of the Spouse in the Canticle, "I sleep, but my heart watcheth" (Cant. v. 2)?

Let this be said, however, with all due deference to the different opinions which others may entertain, and particularly to anything contrary which may be found in the pages of Holy Scripture. But I cannot help thinking that the sleep cast upon Adam was no ordinary sleep, nothing resembling the slumber so familiar to ourselves, which is produced in us neither by ecstatic contemplation nor by an affection of compassion, but solely by the exhaustion of our bodily

strength: which is cast upon us by necessity rather than by charity or truth. For so it is written, "A heavy yoke is upon the children of Adam" (Ecclus. xl. 1). That yoke was not laid upon Adam himself at the beginning, but it lies now upon all his children. What is there indeed that is not a heavy yoke for miserable mortals, for whom even life itself is a labour, and for whom (although few appear to notice it, and none at all realise it fully) the very use of the senses has become a burden which we are unable to endure, unless refreshed by frequent alternations of repose? What is there, I ask, but labour and sorrow and vexation of spirit amongst all the things that are under the sun, since even that which in itself is most agreeable to the spirit, I mean the communication of life and sensibility to the flesh, can become for it an intolerable burden? For how pleasant to the spirit is its union with the flesh is shown by the pain it feels at parting, since it can scarcely be torn from the society of the body even then, when corruption has rendered the latter no longer a suitable subject for its vitalising influence. It is not the body simply as such, but the body that is corrupted that is said to be "a load upon the soul" (Wisdom ix. 15). From this we may infer that the soul of our first father was free from that burden so long as his body remained incorrupt. For God established him in liberty, and placed him between what is highest and what is lowest, in such a manner that he was able to ascend without difficulty to the former and to descend to the latter without being necessitated by any violence or force of attraction, penetrating what was above him by the native vivacity and purity of his mind, governing what was

under him with the authority of a monarch. Thus we read that the irrational animals were led to Adam, in order that he might see what names should be given them: not that he was led to them by any curiosity to see them * (Gen. ii. 19).

But in us, my brethren, the spirit does not enjoy the same liberty: rather it has to struggle against opposition on all sides. For it is held captive by the things below, as a bird gets caught in bird-lime; whilst at the same time it is repelled as unworthy by the things above, so that it can neither free itself from the former without pain, nor gain access to the latter, even rarely, without great toil and many tears. Thus, on the one side "they that seek my soul use violence" (Ps. xxxvii. 13), so that I am compelled to cry out, "Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. vii. 24); and on the other, "before I eat I sigh" (Job iii. 24), because "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and (only) the violent bear it away" (Matt. xi. 12). Moreover, we must maintain unity with regard to what is high, and observe distinctions in what is low, just as Adam's powers were united in the sleep of contemplation, and he afterwards distinguished the animals by the imposition of proper names. And of Abraham also we read that, when offering sacrifice, he divided the beasts but not the birds (Gen. xv. 9, 10). Martha, too, was "troubled about many things," whereas "but one thing is necessary" (Luke x. 41, 42). One thing indeed is necessary, and very necessary, because it is

* By the irrational animals the Saint understands all earthly objects which had no power of themselves to excite human passions antecedently to the Fall.—(Translator.)

" the best part which shall not be taken away " (ibid.). Division shall cease when the fulness comes, and all the holy city of " Jerusalem shall be compacted together " (Ps. cxxi. 3). In the meantime, however, the Spirit of Wisdom reveals Himself not only as single, but also as manifold (Wisdom vii. 22; Ephes. iii. 10), establishing in a stable unity all that is interior, whilst distinguishing exterior things in judgment. We have an example of both these functions presented to us in the primitive Church, when, as we read, " the multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul " (Acts iv. 32),—that is to say, the birds were not divided—" and distribution was made to every one according as he had need " (ibid. 35), viz., a division was made in the case of the beasts. Therefore amongst us also, dearest brethren, let there be a union of souls. Let our hearts be one by loving the same Object, seeking the same Object, cleaving to the same Object, and entertaining the same sentiments. Thus external division shall involve no danger and give no scandal. For although each one will have his own particular occupation, and sometimes also his own particular view regarding the administration of worldly affairs, yea, there are even " diversities of graces " (1 Cor. xii. 4), and the members of the body have not all the same act: nevertheless, the interior union and harmony of souls shall bring and bind together such multiplicity, using the glue of charity and " the bonds of peace " (Ephes. iv. 3).

FIRST SERMON FOR LENT.

On what is meant by Anointing the Head and Washing the Face.

"And when you fast, do not, as the hypocrites, make yourselves appear sad. For they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face."*—Matt. vi. 16, 17.

To-day, dearest brethren, we enter upon the holy season of Lent, upon the season of special warfare for the Christian. This Lenten observance is not confined to ourselves: it is common to all who are united to us by the profession of the one true faith. Why should not all Christians participate in the fast of Christ? Why should not the members follow their Head? "If we have received good things" from our Divine Head, "why should we not receive evil" (Job ii. 10)? Is it that we want to share in His joys and to have no part in His sorrows? If that be the case, we prove ourselves unworthy to be His members. For all that He suffers, He suffers for our sake. But if we are unwilling to co-operate with Him in the work of our own salvation, how, I ask, shall we show ourselves His coadjutors (1 Cor. iii. 9)? Surely it is no great thing for him to fast with Christ, who is destined to sit with Christ at His Father's table. Surely it is nothing great that the member should suffer with the Head when it is also to be glorified with the Head.

* So the Saint understands the text: "Nolite fieri sicut hypocritae, tristes."—(Translator.)

Happy the member that in all things adheres faithfully to this Head and follows Him "whithersoever He goeth" (Apoc. xiv. 4)! But if ever it should chance to be cut off and separated from the Head, it shall also be deprived, immediately and of necessity, of the spirit of life. For how can either sensibility or life belong to any part of the body which is not in union with its Head? Nor shall there be wanting one who will claim for his own the repudiated member, so that even then it shall be subject to a head. For the "root of bitterness" (Heb. xii. 15) shall germinate again; it shall again put forth that venomous head, that head, I say, which was crushed long ago under the heel of the strong woman, that is, of Mother Church (Gen. iii. 15): I refer to the time when she, the spiritual mother, regenerated unto the hope of life him whom his mother according to the flesh brought forth by nature a child of wrath.

Now, therefore, if there be any person who has "the eyes of his heart enlightened" (Ephes. i. 18), and knows how to examine things spiritually (1 Cor. ii. 14), to him such a one must appear as a most horrible monster, having the body of a man and the head of a demon. But this is not all. For that viperine head which had before been cut off, is now not only back again, but has brought "seven others more wicked than itself," so that "the last state of that man is made worse than the first" (Matt. xii. 45). My brethren, who does not tremble at the very sound of these words? "Shall I then take the member of Christ and make it a member of" the devil (1 Cor. vi. 15)? Shall I cut myself off from the body of Christ in order to be miserably incorporated in Satan? Far be it from us ever to contemplate so

detestable an exchange! Verily "it is good for me to adhere to" Thee (Ps. lxxii. 28), O Divine Head, glorious and blessed for ever, "on Whom the angels desire to look" (1 Peter i. 12). I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest (Matt. viii. 19). Even shouldst Thou pass through fire, I will not be separated from Thee; and "I will fear no evils, for Thou art with me" (Ps. xxii. 4). Thou dost carry my sorrows (Is. liii. 4) and art grieving for me. Thou goest first through the strait way of the passion in order to render the passage easier for Thy members following after Thee. "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom. viii. 35). For this love it is by which "the whole body, being compacted and fitly joined together, maketh increase unto the edifying of itself" (Ephes. iv. 16). This, my brethren, is that good solder of which the Prophet Isaias speaks (Is. xli. 7). It is this that makes it so "good and pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Ps. cxxxii. 1). The same is the "precious ointment" that from the Head "runs down upon the beard," yea, and descends from the Head even to the "skirt of the garment" (ibid. 2), so that not even the very least fringe may be deprived of its share of the unction. For the Head contains the fulness of graces of which "fulness we have all received" (John i. 16); in the Head is the inexhaustible fountain of divine mercy; in the Head is all the abounding treasure of spiritual ointment, according to the words of the Psalmist, "God, thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows" (Ps. xliv. 8). Nevertheless, the same Head that the Father had so plentifully anointed was also fearlessly anointed by Mary. The disciples indeed complained, but Truth

answered in her defence that she had wrought a good work upon Him (Matt. xxvi. 7-10).

But, my brethren, what is enjoined on us by the Gospel of to-day? "Thou, when thou fastest," says the Saviour, "anoint thy Head." Wonderful condescension! "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Him, because the Lord hath anointed Him" (Is. lxi. 1): and nevertheless, when preaching the Gospel to the poor (Luke iv. 18), He says to them, "anoint thy Head"! The Father is well pleased in His Son, and whilst the Paternal voice is sounding in the air, the Holy Spirit comes down in the form of a dove. Think you, my brethren, that chrism was wanting at the baptism of Christ? The Spirit of the Lord remained upon Him, according to the testimony of the Baptist (John i. 32): who then can doubt that he was anointed by the Lord? "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17): have we not here the very fragrance of the spiritual ointment? The Father "hath anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows" (Ps. xlix. 8) Him in Whom He is well pleased beyond all others. For the Father loveth the Son (John iii. 35) with an affection all divine and incommunicable to any creature. The Father, I say, hath anointed the Son above His fellows, by pouring out upon Him without reserve all the graces of benignity, gentleness, and sweetness, and filling Him most abundantly with the bowels of mercy and compassion. After so anointing Him, He sent Him to us, and caused us to see Him full of tenderness and grace. Thus was our Head anointed by the Father, and nevertheless He demands to be anointed also by us. "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy Head"—so He charges each one of us. Is it thus

the unfailing Fountain begs water of the poor rivulet? Aye, even thus: or rather It demands back that which It has Itself bestowed. For "unto the place from whence the rivers come they return to flow again" (Eccles. i. 7).

It is not, however, because there is anything wanting to Christ that He requires back what He has given us, but only in order that nothing may be lost to us by our willingly referring all to Him. For just as the water of a river becomes corrupted when it begins to stagnate, and, forming a lake, prevents the free flow of what follows: in the same manner the current of grace ceases whenever it is not directed back to its source; and not only does the ingrate receive nothing more, but even that which has been given him is turned to his ruin. On the other hand, he who is faithful in returning due thanks for that which is less, shall be accounted worthy of greater benefits. Therefore, "anoint thy Head," by referring to Him Who is above thee whatever thou hast of devotion, whatever of spiritual delight, whatever of the affection of charity. "Anoint thy Head," by attributing to Him every gift of grace of which thou mayest find thyself possessed, and by seeking His glory rather than thine own. For he who "in every place is the good odour of Christ unto God" (2 Cor. ii. 14, 15) may be said to anoint Christ. But remember that before bidding thee anoint thy Head, He uttered these other words against hypocrites, "Do not, as the hypocrites, make yourselves sad." He does not thereby interdict every kind of sadness, but only that sadness which appears in the face and to the eyes of men. For, according to the Wise Man, "the heart of the wise is where there

is mourning" (Eccles. vii. 5). And St. Paul declared that he did not repent of having made his disciples sorrowful, because such sorrow was unto salvation for them (II Cor. vii. 8). Very different from this is the sorrow of the hypocrites, which dwells, not in the heart, but in the face. For it is added, "They disfigure their faces."

Observe, then, my brethren, that the Lord did not say, "*Be not*, as the hypocrites, sad," but, "Do not, as the hypocrites, *make yourselves appear* sad," that is, do not pretend to be sad. Thus we often hear it said in this sense, "such or such a one makes himself appear sad"; "such and such a one makes himself appear great"; and in the same sense the Prophet said, "They that bless, that is, pretend to bless, this people shall cause them to err" (Is. ix. 16): these and all such like expressions are significant, not of truth, but of simulation. "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy Head and wash thy face." The hypocrites disfigure their faces: thou art told to wash thy face. Now by the face we are to understand here the external conduct, which the faithful follower of Christ washes clean so that there may be nothing in it to offend the eyes of the beholder, and which the hypocrite disfigures by affecting what is singular and extraordinary. Neither does the hypocrite anoint his Head, since his heart is far removed from the love of Christ, and he finds all his happiness in the vain applause of men. He rather anoints himself in order to spread abroad the fragrance of his self-conceit. Or, since it is manifest that Christ is not the head of the hypocrite, perhaps it would be more proper to say that such a one cannot even anoint his own head

of whatever kind it may be, inasmuch as his soul is soothed, not by the testimony of a good conscience, but by the oil of flattery.* So we read that "the foolish virgins said to the wise: Give us of your oil" (Matt. xxv. 8). Why this request? Because they had no oil in their own vessels. But it is not the custom of the prudent to give away oil of this kind. For how could they do to others what they would not wish to have done to themselves? But listen to the Prophet to whom God had revealed "the uncertain and hidden things" of His wisdom (Ps. l. 8): "Let not the oil of the sinner, "he says, "fatten my head" (Ps. cxl. 5). This is the oil which the hypocrites purchase for themselves, and, as the Lord declares, "they have received their reward." "For they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast." Take notice, my brethren, how in this short sentence He at the same time animadverts upon the singularity of hypocrites and condemns their vanity. Observe also how briefly He counsels us to "provide good things not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of all men" (Rom. xii. 17), when He adds, "anoint thy head and wash thy face"—that is, let thy external conduct be irreproachable, but at the same time let it be the intention of thy heart to secure for thyself the divine favour: do what is right in the eyes of men, not however as seeking thine own glory, but the glory of God (Matt. v. 16).

It is also possible to understand the washed face as signifying a pure intention; and the anointed head can be taken to mean a devout soul. If this inter-

* Which, namely, must be applied by the hands of others.—(Translator.)

pretation commends itself to you, you will likewise agree that the injunctions to wash the face and to anoint the head are given as remedies against the two vices to which persons who fast are wont to be especially tempted. Thus there is one who fasts from a motive of vanity, and to him it is said, "Wash thy face"; another in his fast yields to impatience and bitterness, and such as he has need to anoint his head. According to this interpretation, the head signifies the interior of the mind, which we may say is then anointed in its fasting, when fasting has become for it a source of spiritual joy. Does it seem strange to you, my brethren, that I speak of the head as anointed by fasting? But I will say what is more: the head is even fattened in fasting. Have you not read what is written, "The eyes of the Lord are on them that fear Him, and on them that hope in His mercy, to deliver their souls from death and to feed them in famine" (Ps. xxxii. 18, 19)? Therefore the fast of the flesh is the head's anointing, and the hunger of the body is the soul's refection; yea, I might even call it the soul's anointing, since it serves to heal my spiritual wounds and to soothe my troubled conscience. Let the hypocrite, then, buy with his fast the oil of the sinner: as for me, I refuse to sell my fast, but I will use it as oil wherewith to anoint myself. "Anoint thy head," says the Lord, lest any discontent or impatience should find admission to thy soul. But this is not enough. Thou oughtest even to glory in tribulation, as the Apostle recommends (Rom. v. 3). Thou oughtest to glory, I say, yet without any desire of vainglory, so that thy face also may be free from the defilement of the oil of the sinner.

SECOND SERMON FOR LENT.

On what is meant by Conversion and by Rending the Heart.

"Now, therefore, saith the Lord: Be converted to Me with all your heart, in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning. And rend your hearts and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God."—Joel ii. 12, 13.

"Be converted to Me with all your heart," says the Lord Almighty, "in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning. And rend your hearts and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God." What means it, dearest brethren, that the Lord here commands us to turn to Him? For He is everywhere, He fills all things and at the same time contains all things. Whither shall I turn that I may turn to Thee, O Lord my God? "If I ascend into Heaven, Thou art there; if I descend into hell, Thou art present" (Ps. cxxxviii. 8). What dost Thou require me to do? In what way must I turn so as to turn unto Thee? Is it up or down? To right or to left? This, my brethren, is a secret of divine wisdom, a secret which is communicated only to the friends of God. It is a "mystery of the kingdom of God" (Mark iv. 11) which is revealed privately to the disciples: for to the multitude nothing is spoken without parable (ibid. 34). "Unless you be converted," said the Lord, "and become as this little child, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii. 3). Now I see plainly whither He wants us to turn. We must turn to that little Child in order to learn from Him, because He is "meek and humble

of heart" (Matt. xi. 29). For unto this has the Child been given us (Is. ix. 6). This little One is indeed great also, but only in the city of God, to which the Prophet calls out, "Rejoice and give praise, O thou habitation of Sion, for great is He That is in the midst of thee, the Holy One of Israel" (Is. xii. 6). Why, O man, dost thou inflate thyself? Why dost thou exalt thyself without reason? Wherefore art thou high-minded? And wherefore do thine eyes behold everything that is lofty (Job xli. 25) and which cannot profit thee? The Lord is high indeed, but it is not as high that He has made Himself thy model. His greatness is admirable, yet not also imitable. His magnificence is high, and thou canst not reach to it (Ps. cxxxviii. 6): try as thou wilt, thou shalt never lay hold of it. As the Psalmist sings, "Man shall come to a high heart and God shall be exalted" (Ps. lxiii. 7, 8). "For the Lord is high and looketh on the low, and the high He knoweth afar off" (Ps. cxxxvii. 6). Only humble thyself and thou hast attained to Him. This is assuredly a law of mercy, "and by reason of this law, I have hoped in Thee, O Lord" (Ps. cxxix. 4). If the path appointed to lead us unto God were the path of loftiness, and if that were the way by which is shown the salvation of the Lord (Ps. xlix. 23), Oh, what would not men do in order to exalt themselves! How pitilessly they would overthrow and trample upon each other! How shamelessly they would stoop to the meanest practices and endeavour with might and main to mount aloft, so as to be placed over the heads of other men! Yet it is an undoubted fact that he who attempts to rise above his fellows will meet with many an obstacle,

will have many rivals and opponents, those, namely, who are influenced by the same ambition to rise. On the other hand, nothing is so easy as to humble oneself—all that is necessary is the desire. Dearest brethren, these are truths which render our pride absolutely inexcusable, and leave it without any veil, even the thinnest, under which to shelter.

But let us now see in what manner we ought to turn to this little One, to this Master of meekness and humility. "Be converted to Me," He says, "with all your heart." My brethren, had His words been simply, "Be converted to Me," without any addition, it would be open to us to reply: *That* we have already done, give us now another precept. As a matter of fact, however, He admonishes us here—unless I mistake—of a purely spiritual conversion which cannot be accomplished in a single day; and would to God we were able to complete it in the whole course of the life we have to live in the body! An external turning to God, unaccompanied by a conversion of the heart and spirit is nothing worth. It is only a formal, not a true conversion, "having the appearance indeed of godliness but lacking the power thereof" (2 Tim. iii. 5). Unhappy the man who, devoting all his attention to outward observances, remains ignorant of his interior, for "thinking himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (Gal. vi. 3). "I am poured out like water," says the Psalmist, speaking in the person of such a one, "and all my bones are scattered" (Ps. xxi. 15). And another of the prophets says of him who is thus exclusively attentive to external forms, "Strangers have devoured his strength and he hath not known it"

(Osee vii. 9). For as he looks only to the outward appearance, when that is found in order he judges everything secure, not feeling the secret worm that is consuming his vitals. The tonsure still remains, the religious habit is not yet put off, the regular fasts are observed as before, the divine praises are chanted at the hours appointed: nevertheless the Lord says complainingly of such a one, "His heart is far from Me" (Mark vii. 6).

My brother, consider carefully what is the object of thy love and of thy fear, what is the source of thy joy and of thy sadness, and thou shalt find a worldly spirit under the habit of religion, and under the tattered covering of an exterior conversion a perverted heart. For the whole heart is made up of these four affections,* and, so it seems to me, it is with reference to them we must understand the precept to turn to the Lord with all our heart. Therefore, let thy love be converted to God, so that henceforth thou shalt love nothing besides Him, or at least nothing except for His sake. Let thy fear, too, be converted to the Lord, because perverted is every fear whereby thou fearest aught besides Him or anything but on account of Him. To Him let thy joy also and likewise thy sadness be converted. This will have been done when thou shalt no longer either grieve or rejoice except according to God. For what could be more perverse than to be "glad when thou hast done evil and to rejoice in most wicked things" (Prov. ii. 14)? Moreover, the sadness which is according to the flesh "worketh death" (2 Cor. vii. 10). If, on the contrary,

* Cf. *Sermons on the Canticle of Canticles*, vol. i. p. 95, note (Mt. Melleray Translation).—(Translator .

thou grievest for thine own or thy neighbour's sin, such sorrow is "unto salvation" (ibid.); and if thou rejoicest over the gifts of grace, this is a holy joy and a secure joy, for it is "joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17). But, furthermore, for the love of Christ thou oughtest also to rejoice with thy brother in his prosperity and to condole with him in his misfortunes, according to what is written, "Rejoice with them that rejoice, weep with them that weep" (Rom. xii. 15).

Nevertheless, even a bodily or exterior conversion ought not to be despised, for, as you know, it is a very important help to that which is spiritual. Hence it is that in the text I am considering, after the Lord had said, "with your whole heart," He immediately added, "in fasting," which appertains to the body. But I would have you to understand, dearest brethren, that this fast must be observed not only from food, but also from everything that flatters the flesh, from all bodily gratifications, yea, we are bound much more strictly to fast from the vices of the soul than from aliments of the body. There is one kind of bread, however, from which I should be sorry to see you fasting, lest perhaps you should "faint in the way" (Mark viii. 3). And if you know not what bread I speak of, let me tell you it is the bread of tears. For our text goes on, "in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning." The mourning is required of us by repentance for the past, and the yearning for the bliss to come is the cause of the weeping. So the Psalmist sings, "My tears have been my bread day and night, whilst it is said to me daily: Where is thy God?" (Ps. xli. 4). But the newness of this heavenly life will have little charm for him who has not yet begun

to lament the evils of his old life, to lament the sins he has been guilty of, to lament the loss of time. If thou mournest not, it is manifest that thou art insensible to the wounds of thy soul and to the damage done to thy conscience. On the other hand, thou dost not desire the bliss in store as ardently as thou oughtest unless thou askest for it daily with sighs and tears: it is a sign that that bliss is not sufficiently known to thee if it be not the case that thy soul "refuseth to be comforted" (Ps. lxxvi. 3) until it has been bestowed.

The Lord then continued, speaking by the mouth of His Prophet, "Rend your heart and not your garments." By these words He evidently reproved the old Jewish people for their hardness of heart and their vain superstitions. For the rending of garments was much more common with them than the rending of hearts. How indeed could those flinty hearts be rent which could not be even circumcised? (Acts vii. 51). "Rend your hearts and not your garments." Is there any individual amongst you, my brethren, whose will is wont to attach itself with too much tenacity to some one particular object? Let him rend his heart, let him cleave it with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Let him rend it, I repeat, and make haste to divide it into many fragments. For it is impossible for him to be converted to the Lord with all his heart until his heart has been thus rent. Until we have attained to the unity of "Jerusalem which is compact together" (Ps. cxxi. 3), we have many things in the meantime prescribed to us, and whosoever offends in one point, is become guilty of all" (James ii. 10). "The Spirit of the Lord is manifold" (Wisdom

vii. 22), says the Wise Man, hence he that desires to follow Him must have his heart rent with a manifold rending. Listen to the man whom the Lord hath found "according to His own heart" (1 Kings xiii. 14). "My heart is ready, O God," he exclaims, "my heart is ready" (Ps. lvi. 8)—ready, that is, for adversity and ready for prosperity, ready for what is high and ready for what is low: ready, in short, for everything which it may please Thee to command. Is it Thy will to make me an humble shepherd of the flock? Or art Thou pleased to appoint me ruler over the nations? "My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready." "Who is so faithful as David" coming in and going out and proceeding in everything at the bidding of the King? (1 Kings xxii. 14). Comparing himself with sinners, the same Prophet says, "Their heart is curdled like milk: but I have meditated on Thy law" (Ps. cxviii. 70): wherein it is insinuated that hardness of heart and obstinacy of mind are the result of our electing to meditate on our own will rather than on the law of God.

Dearest brethren, let us therefore rend our hearts, in order that thus we may be able to keep our garments whole. Our garments are our virtues. A beautiful garment is charity, and obedience is another beautiful garment. "Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth these garments that he may not walk naked" (Apoc. xvi. 15); for, as the Psalmist says, "blessed are they whose sins are covered" (Ps. xxxi. 1). And St. Peter tells us that "Charity covereth a multitude of sins" (1 Peter iv. 8). Accordingly, as I have said, let us rend our hearts to the end that we may keep our garments entire, just as the Saviour kept His coat

entire (John xix. 24). Yea, the rending of our hearts will not alone preserve our coat undivided, but will even lengthen it out and make it to be "of divers colours," like that which the holy Patriarch Jacob gave to the son whom he loved beyond the rest (Gen. xxxvii. 3). For the effect of such a rending of heart is perseverance in the virtues and the many-coloured unity of a beautiful life. Hence also springs that "glory of the King's daughter, in golden borders, clothed round about with varieties" (Ps. xliv. 14, 15).

It is possible, however, to understand this rending of heart in another sense, as if we should say that compunction rends the evil heart, or that compassion rends the strong heart. Why should not the ulcer be rent in order that the pus may flow out? Why should not the heart be rent in order that it may flow forth in the bowels of mercy? Both rendings are undoubtedly profitable, for it is well that the poison of sin should not remain concealed in the heart, and it is well also that the bowels of compassion should not be closed to an indigent neighbour, so that we ourselves may obtain mercy from our Lord Jesus Christ, "Who is over all things God blessed for ever. Amen" (Rom. ix. 5).

THIRD SERMON FOR LENT.

On the Manner of Keeping the Lenten Fast.

"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near."—Isaias lv. 6.

I beseech you, most dearly beloved, to enter with all possible fervour upon this quadragesimal fast, which is commended to us not alone by the law of abstinence, but also and much more by the mystery it contains. If we have fasted devoutly during the rest of the year, with still greater devotion ought we to observe the fast of this holy season, And although the present fast is somewhat more rigorous than that which we are accustomed to keep at other times, surely it would be an unworthy thing were we to find that burden too heavy which the whole Church of God is bearing with us. Hitherto we have fasted alone until the ninth hour: henceforth all alike, kings and princes, clerics and laymen, high and low, "both rich and poor together" (Ps. xlviii. 3) shall fast with us until evening. I remind you of this, my brethren, lest perchance some of you should be oppressed by "pusillanimity of spirit" (Ps. liv. 9), and so should enter upon this sacred season with imperfect dispositions, being discouraged by the thought of the difficulty found in supporting the previous and lighter fast. For the adversary endeavours as much as he can to deprive our holocaust of the fatness of devotion (Ps. xix. 4), in order that it may be rendered less pleasing to God, and that our consciences may be less comforted with

spiritual joy, and that thus "weakness of conscience" (1 Cor. viii. 7) may result from weakness in endurance. Therefore, I entreat you, let us be on our guard against him with all solicitude, "for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Cor. ii. 11). And since "God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. ix. 7), and also for the sake of fortifying our consciences with an increase of holy confidence, let us try to render our fast more devout by keeping carefully before our minds the example of the universal Church.

But why do I speak of them who are associated with us in this Lenten observance as if we had no better models, as if the quadragesimal fast were consecrated by the participation of none more holy? Oh, with what devotion ought we not to observe that which has been transmitted to us as an inheritance from the righteous Moses who, by a special privilege granted to no other prophet, spoke to the Lord face to face (Exod. xxxiv. 28; xxxiii. 11)! With what alacrity should we not embrace a practice commended to us by the example of Elias, who was taken up to heaven in a fiery chariot (3 Kings xix. 8; 4 Kings ii. 11)! How many millions have been claimed by death since that assumption in accordance with the general law of mortality! And still Elias lives on, preserved from dissolution by the power of God. But if we are encouraged to undertake this fast by the example of Moses and Elias, who, however illustrious they may be, are still only our fellow-servants: how much greater encouragement should we not find in the example of our Lord Jesus Christ Who also fasted for forty days (Matt. iv. 2)! What manner of monk would he be, nay, what manner of Christian, who should only submit

with reluctance to an observance delivered to him by Christ? Besides, we ought to imitate His example with all the more fervour because of the knowledge we have that He fasted not for His own sake but for ours.

Let us fast, therefore, dearest brethren, and let us fast with devotion during this holy season of Lent. But let us also remember that the time of our Lent must not be limited to forty days: we are required to continue it all the days of this miserable existence, during which, with the help of divine grace—commended to us in the four Gospels—we have to fulfill the ten commandments of the law. They are manifestly in error who suppose that these few days are sufficient for the practice of penance, since it is obvious that the whole period of our earthly life is ordained for no other purpose. "Seek ye the Lord," says the Prophet, and not only during forty days, but "while He may be found" (Is. lv. 6). "Call upon Him while He is near" (ibid.). For the time of calling upon Him will then have gone by, when God shall be near to no one, but to some intimately present and from others far remote. From the fact that He is declared to be *near*, it is clear that He is not yet present, not yet possessed, but it is equally evident that He can be found and possessed without difficulty. "Who seemeth to thee to have been neighbour to him that fell among the robbers?" Doubtless "he that shewed mercy to him" (Luke x. 36, 37). Therefore, since the Lord is near during all this time of mercy, "seek ye Him," most dearly beloved, "seek ye Him while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near."

Nevertheless, we ought to seek Him with greater ardour during this quadragesimal Lent, which is not only

a part, but the most sacred part of the whole season of mercy. If, then, at other times we have suffered our zeal to grow slack, it is fitting that our hearts should now be warmed with a renewal of spiritual fervour.* If the stomach alone has sinned, let the stomach alone fast, and that sufficeth. But if the other members have sinned also, why should not they be made to fast as well as the stomach? Therefore let the "eye which hath wasted the soul" (Jer. Lam. iii. 51) be made to fast. Let the ear too be made to fast, and the tongue, and the hand, yea, and the soul herself. Let the eye fast from curious and wanton looks, so that, wholesomely humbled, it may now be kept in penitential restraint, which before made use of pernicious liberty

* "So great are the mysteries of our redemption that they demand from us constant devotion and unflagging fervour, so that we should remain always in the sight of God such as we hope to be on the feast of Easter. But very few are capable of such perfection, for we grow lax through the infirmity of the flesh, and the cares of life distract us. In this way even religious souls become necessarily soiled with the dust of the world. It is therefore by a most salutary dispensation of divine wisdom that a season of forty days has been appointed in which, by good works and holy fasts, we may redeem and expiate the faults of other times, and so regain purity of conscience. Let us, then, dearly beloved, on entering upon this mystical season, instituted for the purification of our bodies and souls, pay particular heed to the words of the Apostle and cleanse ourselves 'from all defilement of the flesh and of the spirit' (2 Cor. vii. 1). . . . For we shall deserve the censure of unbelievers and arm against religion the tongues of the impious if during our fast there appears aught in our conduct which virtue would disavow. It is not the mere abstinence from food that gives fasting its chief value: for we gain nothing by depriving the body of its nourishment, unless the soul at the same time abstains from sin."—St. Leo, Serm. IV. *de Quadr.*

"Although the whole life of a monk ought to be a continual Lent, yet, as only few are so virtuous, we exhort the brethren that, renewing their vigilance and fervour, they lead such pure and holy lives during this season as to make amends for all the negligences of the past year."—Holy Rule of St. Benedict, xlix. (Mt. Melleray Translation).

to wander at large in sin. Let the prurient ear fast from news and idle tales and from all that is vain and worthless with regard to salvation. Let the tongue fast from detraction and murmuring, from unprofitable, vain and frivolous words, and—because of the great importance of silence—sometimes even from words that might seem necessary. Let the hand fast from useless signs, and from every work not sanctioned by obedience. But above all, let the soul fast from vice and the following of her own will. For without this kind of fasting, all the rest will have no value in the eyes of God. So we read in the Prophet that when the people said to the Lord: "Why have we fasted and Thou hast not regarded; have we humbled our souls and Thou hast not taken notice?" they received this answer: "Behold in the day of your fast your own will is found" (Is. lviii. 3).

FOURTH SERMON FOR LENT.

On Fasting and Prayer.

"The prayer of the just man pierceth the heavens."
—Ecclus. xxxv. 21.

Now that we are about to enter upon the Lenten fast—which I exhort your charity to observe with all devotion—I think it will be well to explain shortly with what fruit and in what manner this fast should be kept. In the first place, then, by abstaining now even from lawful gratifications, we merit the forgiveness of the unlawful gratifications we have been guilty of in the past. But what is it to obtain the pardon of our sins if not that an eternal fast is avoided by the voluntary endurance of a temporal? For we have deserved hell, where there is never any food, never any consolation, never any termination; where the rich man asks for one drop of water and is deemed unworthy to obtain it (Luke xvi. 24-26). Good, therefore, and very wholesome are these temporal fasts which, by obtaining for us the pardon of our offences, deliver us from everlasting fasts and everlasting torments. And not only do they cancel our sins, but they also extinguish our vices; not only do they obtain forgiveness, but they also merit grace; not only do they repair our falls in the past, but they also prevent future falls which we should not otherwise perhaps have the grace to avoid.

I will say something more which you will readily

understand, as having often, unless I mistake, experienced it in yourselves. Let me tell you, then, that fasting gives us devotion and confidence at prayer. And notice how prayer and fasting assist each other like two allies, according to what is written, "When a brother helps a brother, both shall be comforted" (Prov. xviii. 19).* Prayer obtains the strength for fasting and fasting merits the grace to pray. Fasting renders prayer more powerful, and prayer responds by sanctifying the fast and presenting it to the Lord. What would our fast profit us if—which God forbid—it were allowed to remain upon the earth? Let it therefore be lifted up on the wing of prayer. But lest this wing alone should not be sufficient, it is necessary to add a second. "The prayer of the just man," says the Holy Scripture, "pierceth the heavens" (Ecclus. xxxv. 21). Consequently, in order that our fast may be easily lifted up to heaven, let it be provided with the two wings of prayer and justice. Now what is justice but the virtue which inclines us to render everyone his due? Cease, therefore, to have regard solely to God. Thou art also a debtor to thy human superiors, yea, and a debtor to thine equals. It certainly is not the will of God that thou shouldst despise those whom He is so far from despising. It is not without reason that the Apostle tells thee to "provide good things not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of all men" (Rom. xii. 17). Thou perchance wast saying to thyself, "It is enough for me if I have the approval of God alone for my conduct: why should I be con-

* "Frater adjuvans fratrem, ambo consolabuntur." The Vulgate has, "Frater qui adjuvatur a fratre quasi civitas firma"—"a brother that is helped by his brother is like a strong city"—which translates the Greek.—(Translator.)

cerned about the judgment of men ? " But be assured of this : that the Lord is pleased with no action of thine which either gives scandal to His children or which is done against the will of him whom thou art bound to obey as His vicar. " Sanctify the fast," says the Prophet, " call a solemn assembly " (Joel ii. 15). What is it to " call a solemn assembly " but to preserve unity, to foster peace, to " love the brotherhood " (1 Peter ii. 17) ? The proud Pharisee fasted ; he also sanctified his fast, inasmuch as he not only fasted twice in the week, but also returned thanks to God. But he did not call the assembly, since he rather isolated himself by saying, " I am not as the rest of men " (Luke xviii. 11). And therefore his fast, upborne by only one wing, was unable to ascend to heaven. Do you accordingly, dearest brethren, " wash your hands in the blood of the sinner " * (Ps. lvii. 11), and see to it carefully that your fast shall have two wings, " peace, namely, and holiness, without which no man shall see God " (Heb. xii. 14). " Sanctify the fast," that is to say, let a pure intention and devout prayer offer it to the Divine Majesty ; and " call a solemn assembly," that is to say, your fast should not be singular or detrimental to unity. " Praise the Lord with timbrel and choir " (Ps. cl. 4) by making concord accompany your bodily mortification.

Since I have spoken about justice and fasting, it is right that I should say something now concerning prayer. Now, the more efficacious this holy exercise is when discharged as it ought to be, with so much the more craft does the adversary endeavour to hinder

* That is to say, let his example profit you by showing you the evil of pride and singularity.—(Translator.)

it. Sometimes he gravely obstructs it by inspiring "pusillanimity of spirit" (Ps. liv. 9) and immoderate fear. This is wont to happen when a man allows himself to be so taken up with the consideration of his own unworthiness that he loses sight altogether of the goodness of God. "Abyss calleth on abyss" (Ps. xli. 8): the abyss of light on the abyss of darkness, the abyss of mercy on the abyss of misery. For the heart of man is deep and unfathomable. But although my iniquity is great, much greater, O Lord, is Thy goodness. And consequently, whenever my soul shall "disquiet me" (Ps. xli. 6-12) I shall be "mindful of the multitude of Thy mercies" (Ps. cv. 7) and so shall be comforted. And when I shall enter into my own weaknesses, I will not be mindful of Thy justice alone (Ps. lxx. 16). But if diffidence in prayer is a source of danger, no less, yea, rather greater is the danger to be apprehended from prayer that is presumptuous. Listen to what the Lord said to His Prophet concerning such as pray with presumption, "Cry, cease not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet. For they seek Me from day to day and desire to know My ways, as a nation that hath done justice and hath not forsaken the judgment of their God" (Is. lviii. 1, 2). "Lift up thy voice like a trumpet," said He, because the presumptuous ought to be reproved "in a vehement spirit" (Ps. xlvii. 9). "For they seek Me," He added, "who have not yet found themselves." My brethren, it is not with any design to make sinners pray with less confidence that I speak thus: I only want them to pray not "as a nation that had done justice," but as a nation that hath sinned. Let them pray for the pardon of their offences with a contrite heart and a

spirit of humility, after the example of the Publican who "struck his breast, saying, O God be merciful to me, a sinner" (Luke xviii. 13). I call it presumption when a man, in whose conscience sin or vice still reigns undisturbed, walks nevertheless "in great matters and in wonderful things above him" (Ps. cxxx. 2), with little concern for the danger of his soul. There is danger also when our prayer is lukewarm and does not proceed from a fervent heart. The prayer that is diffident cannot pierce the clouds, because excessive fear paralyses the soul, so that she is powerless even to send forth her prayer, not to speak of making it ascend. The prayer of tepidity grows weary and fails in the ascent, because it is wanting in vigour. As for the presumptuous prayer, it ascends indeed, but only to fall back again, because it encounters opposition: not only does it not obtain pardon but it even merits punishment. But the prayer that is faithful, and humble, and devout, shall certainly pierce the clouds and enter heaven, whence, with equal certainty, it shall not return empty-handed.

FIFTH SERMON FOR LENT.

On the Necessity of Prayer and the Objects we should Pray for.

"Whatsoever you shall ask in prayer believing, you shall receive."
—Matt. xxi. 22.

The charity wherewith I am solicitous for your souls, dearest brethren, obliges me to address you to-day; and under its influence I should exhort you more frequently were I not hindered by the multiplicity of my occupations. Nor is it anything strange that I should feel anxious concerning you, since I can discover in myself abundant matter and motives for anxiety. For as often as I consider my own miseries and manifold dangers, my soul, I assure you, becomes troubled within me. And not less than for my own soul is my solicitude for every one of you, if yet I truly love you as I love myself. But He Who "searcheth all hearts" (1 Par. xxviii. 9) can bear me witness how often in my heart the solicitude I have for you is even greater than that which I feel for myself. And be not surprised that I am so full of fear and uneasiness with regard to you all, since I behold you burdened with such misery and surrounded with such danger. For, as is only too manifest, we all of us carry in ourselves the source of our own danger and bear about with us everywhere our own worst enemy: I speak of this flesh which was born in sin and nurtured in sin, which has been all corrupted in its origin, and vitiated still more by habits of evil. This is the reason

why it "lusteth against the spirit" (Gal. v. 17) so strongly, why it murmurs so constantly, why it is so impatient of discipline, why it suggests things unlawful, why it refuses to be guided by the judgment, why no kind of fear is able to hold it in check.

The crafty serpent has formed an alliance with this our domestic foe, co-operating with it, and employing it for our destruction. For he has no other desire, no other object, no other occupation, save to shed the blood of souls. He it is that is for ever plotting evil, that arouses the desires of the flesh, that with his evil suggestions blows into a blaze the natural fire of concupiscence, that excites illicit motions, provides occasions for sin, and with a thousand pernicious arts never wearies of tempting the souls of men. He it is that binds our hands with our own girdle and, as the saying is, uses our own staff to beat us: that is to say, the flesh which was given us to be a help, has become for us through his malice a snare and a danger.

But, my brethren, what does it profit you that I point out to you your danger, unless I can also give you some consolation and provide you with some remedies? Great in truth is our peril and very trying the conflict we have to sustain against our domestic enemy; especially since we are only strangers here, whereas it—viz., the flesh—is a native; it is at home in this earthly life where we are but exiles and pilgrims. There is also fearful danger for us in having to endure so many or rather such continuous combats with the cunning and deceitful serpent, whom we cannot even see, and who is so extremely astute, both on account of his natural subtlety and also by reason of his long experience in malice. Nevertheless, the

victory is always in our power, unless we desire to be vanquished. " Thy lust, O man, shall be under thee, and thou shalt have dominion over it " (Gen. iv. 7). The enemy has power to excite in thee the motions of temptation, but it depends altogether on thine own choice to yield or to withhold consent. It lies within thy competence, if thou so desirest, to make a servant of even thine enemy, so that " all things shall work together unto good " for thee (Rom. viii. 28). Thus, for example, the devil awakens in thee a desire for food, or he inspires feelings of vanity or impatience, or he excites the motions of carnal concupiscence: do thou only take care not to consent to him, and as often as thou resistest, thou hast added a new gem to thy crown. However, it cannot be denied that these combats are very laborious, yea, and very perilous too. But even in the heat of the struggle, if we resist manfully, we shall feel in our souls a peculiar and pious tranquillity, which is the fruit of a good conscience. And I believe that if, after adverting to the presence of evil thoughts in our minds, we make no delay, but oppose them immediately with all the energy of our soul: I believe that then the wicked enemy will retire from us in confusion and will not be so anxious to resume the conflict. But who are we and " what is our strength " (Job vi. 11) that we should be able to resist so many temptations? Now this is just what God has been aiming at, this is the term to which He has been trying to conduct us, namely, that recognising our own weakness and that to Him alone must we look for help, we should with all humility have recourse to His mercy. Therefore I exhort you, dearest brethren, to have always at hand the secure refuge of prayer, concerning

which I remember to have spoken towards the end of my last discourse.

But whenever I begin to speak of prayer, it seems to me that I can hear the thoughts of your human hearts asking the questions which I have often been put by others, and have sometimes felt stirring in my own mind. "How is it that, although we pray almost without intermission, none of us appears hardly ever to derive any fruit from his prayer? We seem to be just the same after we have prayed as we were before. No one has answered us a word, no one seemingly has given us anything for our trouble; it looks as if we have been labouring in vain." But what says the Lord in the Gospel? "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge a just judgment" (John vii. 24). Now what judgment is just but the judgment of faith? For it is written, "The just man liveth by faith" (Rom. i. 17). Put your trust, therefore, in the judgment of faith and not in your own experience, because faith is infallible, whereas human perception is liable to err. But where shall we find the truth of faith if not in the promises given by the Son of God Himself? Who has said, "All things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer believing, you shall receive" (Matt. xxi. 22)? My brethren, none of you ought to look upon his own prayer as of little value, for I assure you, He to Whom it is addressed does not so regard it. Before the prayer has time to leave our lips, He orders it to be registered in His own book. And when we pray we can always hope with confidence for one or other of two things: either that He will give us what we ask or that we shall receive something else instead which He knows will be more profitable for us. "For we know not

what we should pray for as we ought" (Rom. viii. 26); but He compassionates our ignorance, and whilst graciously receiving our prayer, refuses to give us what would not be good for us, or defers to grant what shall be more profitably bestowed later on. Our prayer, however, does not remain unfruitful. Yet so, if we have done that which we are admonished to do by the Psalmist, if we have "delighted in the Lord." For says holy David, "Delight in the Lord, and He will give thee the requests of thy heart" (Ps. xxxvi. 4). But what meanest thou, O Prophet, by telling us so absolutely to delight in the Lord, as if such delight depended altogether upon ourselves? We are well enough acquainted with the delight to be found in food, in sleep, in rest, and in the other things that belong to our earthly life: but what of sweetness can we discover in God that we should make Him the object of our delight? Such language, my brethren, would not surprise me, coming from the lips of worldlings; but I do not see how it could proceed from yours. For which of you has not often experienced the delight of a good conscience? Which of you has not enjoyed the sweet savour of purity, of humility, and of charity? This delight has nothing in common with the pleasure we feel in eating and drinking and other such actions, nevertheless it is a true delight, yea, and superior to all other delights. For it is a spiritual, not a carnal delight; and when we delight in spiritual objects—such as the virtues—we manifestly delight in the Lord.

But perhaps many of you will complain to me that they experience too rarely this spiritual relish "sweeter than honey and the honey-comb" (Ps. xviii. 11:

because, namely, they are kept constantly employed in resisting the assaults of temptation. Let me tell them, therefore, that they would act more worthily if they practised virtue with all the strength, even though not with all the affection, of their souls, not for the sake of any sweetness that may be found in it, but from love of the virtues themselves and with the view of pleasing God alone. By behaving thus they would beyond doubt accomplish perfectly what the Prophet enjoins where he says, "Delight in the Lord." For David is speaking here of the practice of the virtues, not of any sensible pleasure in the practice. The pleasures of virtue shall be part of our future happiness, but virtue itself consists more in action than in feeling. Consequently, when thou art told to delight in the Lord, the meaning is that thou shouldst make it thy aim and endeavour that the Lord may sometime become the object of thy delight, "and He will give thee the requests of thy heart." Observe that the Prophet calls the "requests of thy heart" those which are approved by the judgment of reason. Thou hast therefore no cause to complain, but rather an additional motive for fervent thanksgiving whenever thy request is not granted; since thy Lord has such care of thee that as often as thou askest in ignorance what would not be good for thee, He does not give that, but gives instead something better. Thus when a child asks his earthly father for bread, his petition is readily granted. But if he asks also for a knife, the father will refuse him what is unnecessary and may even be hurtful, and will rather divide the bread himself for his little one, or command some of his

servants to do this, so that there may be no risk and no labour for the child.

Now it appears to me that the requests of the heart relate to three objects, besides which I know of nothing that the elect ought to pray for. Two of these objects belong to the present life, namely, the goods of the body and the goods of the soul; whilst the third, viz., a blissful immortality, appertains to the life to come. Do not be surprised, my brethren, to hear that the goods of the body are to be solicited of God, for every kind of good, material as well as spiritual, must be the gift of His bounty. Of Him, therefore, we must ask and expect all that is necessary to support us in His service. Nevertheless, we should pray more often and more earnestly for the necessities of our souls, that is to say, for the gifts of grace and virtue. So too must we pray with all devotion and with the utmost intensity of desire for the crown of eternal life which includes the complete and perfect beatitude of both soul and body. Furthermore, with respect to these three petitions, in order that they may be in truth the petitions of the heart, three evils have to be guarded against. For the first is wont to be invaded by the desire of superfluities, the second by a wrong intention, and the third by pride. I mean to say that sometimes temporal goods are solicited as a source of pleasure; virtues are asked with a view to ostentation; whilst there are many perhaps who pray even for eternal life without humility, but as if relying upon their own merits. I do not deny that grace received renders our prayer more confident. But I maintain that no one ought to make this grace itself the ground of his hope to be heard. The one effect of these first

gifts of God should be to make us hope that the mercy from which they have been obtained, will confer upon us other and greater favours. Accordingly, when we pray for temporal things, let our petition be confined to what is necessary; let our prayer for virtues—the goods of the soul—proceed from a pure intention, which regards nothing else but the good pleasure of God; and let our prayer for eternal life be offered up with all humility, deriving its confidence—as is only proper—from no other source than the divine compassion.

SIXTH SERMON FOR LENT.

On the Petitions of the Lord's Prayer.

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."—Matt. vi. 10.

The will of God, my brethren, which first created the angels, by making them out of nothing, beatified them afterwards by being in a manner made in them. For just as the Word Who was in the beginning (John i. 1) is said and said truly to have been made flesh on assuming flesh: so that eternal will can be described as made in the angels, when it absorbed into itself completely the angelic will. What impropriety can there be in saying that the will of God was made in the angels when it was made the will of the angels? Indeed this very thing is for the angels the consummation of their happiness, this is the torrent of their heavenly delight (Ps. xxxv. 9), the fact, namely, that the divine will is made their own will, so that as God is pleased with His whole administration, they in like manner rejoice and take pleasure in every act, in every creature of His. Here, then, is what we pray for: that God's will should be made the will of man upon earth, as it is made the will of the holy angels in heaven. Thus would man also, being joined to the Lord, become with Him one spirit (1 Cor. vi. 17). But woe is me! How many obstacles lie in the way of so happy a consummation! How many impediments hold us back! We encounter opposition from our natural malice, from our weakness, from our concupiscence, from our ignorance. For we have within us, not from nature,

but rather from the corruption of nature, a most wicked affection and passion for injustice, so that our miserable souls take an inevitable delight in malice. Now could there be anything farther removed from the will of God than such a disposition? Assuredly, between us and that divine will "there is fixed a great chaos" (Luke xvi. 26) in this matter: since it is always a delight for God to confer His benefits upon us, whilst we, on the contrary, wretched ingrates that we are, discover within our own hearts a most cruel inclination to inflict injury on even the innocent. Hence sprouts forth every "root of bitterness" (Heb. xii. 15); hence proceed jealousies, detractions, and enmities innumerable. But these poisonous shoots must be constantly cut away with the pruning-hook of justice. For justice it is which prevents us from doing to another the evil we do not wish should be done to us by another; and which prompts us to render to all the good we desire should be rendered to us by all. Nevertheless, we cannot hope to root out malice completely from our hearts so long as we live in this world, which "is wholly seated in wickedness" (1 John v. 19). The head of the old serpent may indeed be crushed, but spite of that, he shall often be found lying in wait for our heel (Gen. iii. 15).

The second obstacle to the perfect conformity of the human will with the divine, comes from the weakness of this corruptible body. For we cannot help feeling a repugnance to what is painful; and because of this, our wills are often at variance with the will of God: yea, they would revolt altogether from the divine will unless prevented by fortitude, which is the second of the moral virtues.

To the impediment thus constituted by our bodily miseries must be added that of concupiscence, which torments us with a throng of insatiable desires. How is it possible to establish harmony between a will that is full of twists and angles and one that is absolutely righteous and undeviating? Alas for me! O Lord my God, alas for me! because wars beset me on every side; because on every side I am exposed to the enemy's darts, confronted with dangers, embarrassed with obstacles. Whithersoever I turn my gaze, I can nowhere find any security. I have equal cause to fear what gratifies and what displeases me. Fasting and refection, sleep and watching, labour and repose, all militate against me. Hence the Wise Man prayed to the Lord, "Give me neither beggary nor riches" (Prov. xxx. 8), because in both he perceived danger, in both a snare. But if concupiscence is held in check by the virtue of temperance—which is in truth the only remedy against that evil—there shall now be conformity between God's will and ours, although not perfect. This is what the Apostle confesses of himself, where he says, "I myself with the mind serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin that is in my members" (Rom. vii. 25). That is to say, his will was partly in conformity and partly at variance with the divine will. "But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away" (1 Cor. xiii. 10).

Our ignorance is the fourth obstacle in the way of a harmony between the human will and the divine; and you, my brethren, do not need to be told how serious an obstacle this is. For how can I take the will of God for my guide if I do not know what it is?

"Now I know in part" only, and not yet "even as I am known" (1 Cor. xiii. 12). This is the reason why we have to seek with all ardour of desire for the assistance of prudence, in order that God may make His will more and more manifest to us, that we may know what is acceptable with Him at all times (Wisdom ix. 10). Thus, my brethren, the perfection of the virtues, of justice, fortitude, temperance, and prudence, will perfect that union, so blissful and so desirable, causing us to have one and the same will with God, and rendering everything that pleases Him, pleasing to us also. And this shall be for us—as I have declared it to be for the angels—the very consummation of our happiness.

We pray also that the kingdom of the Lord may come, so that through the power of His empire we may enjoy perfect security. But when we ask that His name may be hallowed, we express a desire to mount above ourselves altogether unto the knowledge of Him.* For when we shall find ourselves possessed of secure happiness and happy security from the accomplishment of His will and the establishment of His kingdom in us, we shall then be carried up to Him Who is above us with all the impetuous energy of our souls. "Hallowed be Thy name." The name of God is His glory. But when is that glory not hallowed? Nevertheless we can say with propriety that when God is glorified by us in sanctity, His glory is hallowed or made holy. It is in the same sense we ask that His will, which is eternal,

* According to the holy Preacher when we pray that God's name may be hallowed we are asking Him to give us a perfect knowledge of His glory and sanctity. Cf. A Lapide, *Comment. in Matt.* v. 9.—(Translator.)

may be made in us so as to become ours. Therefore, this petition, which is the greatest, is the first we make in the Lord's Prayer, namely, that the spotless sanctity of His glory may be made manifest to us so that He may be glorified by us in sanctity. We next ask for what regards ourselves, that His kingdom may be firmly established in us for our security and that His will may be made perfect in us as a means to our happiness. But because we do not as yet rejoice in this perfection of the divine will, we are unable to obey its commands without much difficulty. Hence we are in want of food, lest we should faint, we stand in need, I say, of daily bread. Moreover, we frequently wander away from the guidance of God's holy will, abandoning it by our transgressions, and so are under the necessity of pleading for pardon. Hence we say, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." And then, lest perhaps we should fall back into the same faults after obtaining forgiveness, we must ask the same Lord not to lead us into temptation, but rather to draw us forth, and to deliver us from evil. Amen.

SEVENTH SERMON FOR LENT.

On the Pilgrim, the Dead Man, and the Man That is Crucified.

"For I am a stranger with Thee and a sojourner, as all my fathers were."—Ps. xxxviii. 13.

Happy are they, my brethren, who conduct themselves as strangers and pilgrims in this wicked world, preserving themselves pure from its defilement. "For we have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come" (Heb. xiii. 14). Let us therefore "as strangers and pilgrims refrain ourselves from carnal desires which war against the soul" (1 Peter ii. 11). For the pilgrim walks along the high-road: he turns neither to right nor to left. And if he should chance to see persons engaged in angry discussions, he pays no attention; he may meet with wedding parties, or people amusing themselves with dancing, or occupied with some other worldly affairs; but he passes on because he is a pilgrim and has nothing to do with things of this kind. He longs for the homeland, and towards the homeland his steps are bent. "Having food and wherewith to be covered he is content" (1 Tim. vi. 8); he does not desire to be burdened with superfluities. Blessed indeed is the man who thus acknowledges and laments his exile, saying to the Lord with the Psalmist, "For I am a stranger with Thee and a sojourner, as all my fathers were" (Ps. xxxviii. 13). This assuredly is high virtue, but perhaps there is a degree still higher. For although the pilgrim does not mix with the citizens,

he may nevertheless find a pleasure in seeing what is passing around him, in listening to reports from others, and in recounting what he has witnessed himself. And such things, if they do not hold him back entirely, at least delay him and impede his progress; for they cause him to be less occupied with the thought of the homeland, and to proceed on his way with less eager longing. Nay, he may take such delight in these things that now he does not merely delay and advance less speedily, but he even comes to a stand-still and makes no progress at all.

Who then is he that is further removed from the ways of this world than even the pilgrim? Doubtless, he is one of those to whom the Apostle says, "For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 3). For whereas it is very possible for the pilgrim to be delayed longer than is right in seeking provisions for his journey or to be overburdened with the weight of them, the man who is dead remains quite unconcerned even should a sepulchre be wanting. Abuse and praise, flattery and detraction are all alike to the dead man, he does not so much as hear them, because he is dead. O happy death which thus "keeps us unspotted from this world" (James i. 27), yea, alienates us altogether from this world! But it is necessary that Christ should live in him who has ceased to live in himself. This is what the Apostle teaches where he says, "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20). As if he should say, "To all other things I am as one dead: I neither perceive them, nor attend to them, nor trouble myself about them: but if there be any things that appertain to Christ, these shall find me both alive and alert. And if nothing else is

possible to me, I shall at least be sensitive to all that concerns Him, I shall feel pleasure on beholding everything that is done for His honour, and pain at whatever I see opposed to the interests of His glory." He that is thus disposed has undoubtedly attained to a very sublime degree of virtue.

Nevertheless it may be possible to find a degree still more elevated. But where must we seek for it? Where do you suppose but in him of whom I have just been speaking, who was "rapt even to the third heaven" (2 Cor. xii. 2)? For if a third degree of virtue can be found, higher than the two I have mentioned, why may I not believe that it is of this we should understand what is said of the "third heaven"? Listen, therefore, to the Apostle's own words concerning this lofty eminence, not glorying in himself, but saying, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified to me and I to the world" (Gal. vi. 14). "Not only am I dead to the world," he says, "but I am crucified to it—crucifixion being the most ignominious kind of death. I am crucified to it and it is crucified to me. All that the world loves is a cross to me: the delights of the flesh, earthly riches and honours, and the applause of men. On the contrary, whatsoever things the world reputes a cross, to them I attach myself, to them I cling, them I embrace with all the affection of my heart." Is not this a higher degree than the first and second? The pilgrim, if he is prudent and does not forget that he is a pilgrim, proceeds on his way, although not without difficulty, and he does not entangle himself very much in the affairs of this world. The dead man is equally indifferent to the pleasures and pains of our

earthly existence. But he that is "rapt even to the third heaven," finds a cross in everything to which the world is attached and attaches himself to whatever seems a cross to the world. Nevertheless the words of the Apostle can be rightly understood in this other sense also, namely, that the world is crucified to him in his estimation of it, and he is crucified to the world by the compassion he feels for its misery. For he saw the world attached to the cross by the bonds of vice, whilst he was himself crucified to it by the greatness of his pity.

My brethren, let each of us consider now for himself to what degree he has attained, and let us endeavour to go forward "from virtue to virtue (since) the God of gods shall be seen in Sion" (Ps. lxxxiii. 8). But particularly during this holy season of Lent—which, to keep our human fragility from despairing, consists of a definite and short period of days—let us, I beseech you, strive to live with perfect purity of conscience. If it were said to us, "Be solicitous at all times to preserve your conscience in absolute purity": who could help feeling discouraged? As it is, however, we are merely admonished to atone during these few days for the faults and negligences of other times, that even for this short time we may taste the sweetness of perfect purity, and that for the remainder of our lives the fruits of this holy Lent may appear manifest in our conduct. Let us strive then, dearest brethren, to observe this holy season with the utmost devotion, and let us occupy ourselves during these days in repairing our spiritual arms. For now the Saviour, with all the children of the Universal Church, as with His whole army, wages war against the devil. Happy they that shall

have fought strenuously under so noble a commander! During the rest of the year it is only the King's household troops that are called upon to serve in arms, for *they* must be always ready for action; but once in the twelvemonth, and for a definite period, the whole power of the empire is gathered together into one general army. Happy you, who have been accounted worthy to belong to those domestic troops, to whom the Apostle says, "Now you are no longer strangers and foreigners: but you are fellow-citizens with the saints and the domestics of God" (Eph. ii. 19). What therefore ought they to do, who have undertaken to fight during the whole year—what ought they to do now when even those who have no experience of war and have lived hitherto in peaceful occupations, are everywhere taking up arms? Surely they are expected to throw themselves into the old fight with more than their wonted energy, so that by achieving a splendid victory, they may advance the glory of their Emperor and secure their own salvation.

FIRST SERMON FOR PALM SUNDAY.

On the Procession of the Saviour and Those that take part in it.

"And they brought the ass and the colt and laid their garments upon them and made Him sit thereon; and a very great multitude spread their garments in the way, and others cut boughs from the trees."—Matt. xxi. 7, 8.

Not without good reason, my brethren, has the Church, animated as she is by the spirit of her Bridegroom and her God, added to-day, in a novel and wonderful combination, a solemn procession to the reading of the passion. I call this a novel and wonderful combination, because whereas the procession is triumphant and accompanied with songs of joy, the passion is provocative of tears and lamentations. Therefore, since "to the wise and to the unwise I am a debtor" (Rom. i. 14), let us see what lesson this conjunction has for both these classes of men. And we must examine first what it suggests to worldlings, because "not first what is spiritual, but that which is animal" (1 Cor. xv. 46). Accordingly, let the worldly soul consider and understand that "mourning taketh hold of the end of joy" (Prov. xiv. 13). It was indeed in order to impress this truth upon us that He Who in all other things likewise "began to do and to teach" (Acts i. 1), preaching by example as well as by word: it was for this purpose, I say, that He, when made visible in the flesh, was at pains to prove clearly in

His own Person what long before He had announced through His Prophet: "All flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of the field" (Is. xl. 6). If, then, He willed to receive the honour of a triumphal procession, it was because He knew that the day of His most ignominious passion was now at hand. Who ought now to put his hope in the inconstancy of temporal glory, when even in the Author of time and the Creator of the universe he beholds so great a humiliation after so great an exaltation? For in the same city, by the same people, and in the same week, Christ was one day received with a glorious procession and divine honours, and on another subjected to insult and torture," and was reputed with the wicked" (Is. liii. 2). Such is the end of transitory joy, such the fruit of temporal glory. Wisely therefore does the Prophet pray that his "glory may sing to the Lord and that he may not have sorrow" (Ps. xxix. 13), that is to say he asked for a procession which should be followed by no passion.

But as for you, dearest brethren, as "comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. ii. 13), I want you to see in the procession an image of the glory of our heavenly fatherland, and in the passion the way that leads thereto. If in the procession you call to mind that future joy and exultation exceeding great, when "we shall be taken up in the clouds to meet Christ, into the air" (1 Thess. iv. 16): if with all the ardour of desire you long to see the day when Christ the Lord, the Head with all the members, shall be welcomed into the heavenly Jerusalem, receiving the triumph due to His victory, applauded, not now by the Jewish multitudes, but rather by the angelic powers, whilst the

elect of both Dispensations are crying out from every side, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. xx. 19): if, I say, you have thus suggested to you in the procession the term of our pilgrimage, behold also marked out in the passion the way which conducts to that term. For present tribulation is the way to life, the way to glory, the way to the holy city, the way to the kingdom of God, according to the testimony of the Thief who said from his cross, "Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy Kingdom" (Luke xxiii. 42). He beheld Christ on His way to His kingdom, and begged to be remembered by Him when He had arrived there. Thither also came the Thief himself, as the result of his prayer; and by how short a journey you may infer from the fact that he was deemed worthy to be with the Lord in Paradise on that very day (ibid. 43). Thus, the glory of the procession renders the pains of the passion easy to endure, because nothing appears difficult to the soul that loves.

Do not be surprised at me, my brethren, for saying that the procession which we commemorate to-day may be regarded as an image of that heavenly procession destined to follow the judgment (1 Thess. iv. 16). For it is one and the same Lord Who is received in both, although in widely different ways and by different persons. In the earthly procession Christ is seated upon a beast of burden devoid of reason: He will also have a beast of burden in the heavenly, but a rational one, according to what is written, "Men and beasts Thou wilt save, O Lord" (Ps. xxxv. 7), similar to which is this other testimony from the same Prophet, "I am become as a beast before Thee and I am always with Thee" (Ps. lxxii. 23). And see if he is not speaking

here of a procession, since he goes on to say, "Thou hast held me by my right hand, and by Thy will Thou hast conducted me, and with Thy glory Thou hast received me" (ibid. 24). Yea, not even the colt shall be wanting in that final procession. For although the heretic * may murmur and try to keep the little ones from coming to Jesus (Matt. xix. 13, 14), denying the validity of infant baptism: He who was born for us as a Little One (Is. ix. 6) and Who chose as His first fruits a throng of little ones,—I speak of the Holy Innocents—does not now exclude the little ones from grace, because it is in accordance with His mercy and certainly within the range of His omnipotence to supply in them by grace for the incapacity of nature. But in that future procession there shall be no crowds strewing the way with branches of palm and worthless garments. Instead, the four Living Creatures shall let down their wings, and the four-and-twenty Ancients shall cast their crowns before the throne of the Lamb, whilst all the angelic spirits shall refer and attribute to Him whatever they possess of splendour and glory (Apoc. iv. 8, 11).

But now that I have mentioned the beast of burden, the garments, and the palm-branches, it may be worth our while to examine more attentively the three kinds of service which I see rendered to the Saviour in this procession: the first by the ass upon which He is seated, the second by the multitude that "spread their garments in the way" and the third by those who are said to have "cut boughs from the trees" (Matt. xxi.

* Cf. Sermon for the Feast of the Holy Innocents, vol. i. of present series, also Treatise on Consideration, pp. 77-8 (Mt. Melleray Translation).

7, 8). Do you not perceive that amongst all these it is only the poor ass that is self-sacrificed to the Master's honour, and that the others contribute out of their abundance and without any great inconvenience to themselves? But here, my brethren, I know not whether I ought to be silent, lest I should expose you by speaking to the temptation of pride, or whether I ought rather to say what I feel for your consolation. I will choose the latter alternative. Be assured, then, that you hold the place of the beast of burden, since, according to the Apostle's command, you "glorify and bear God in your body" (1 Cor. vi. 20). The men of this world devote to the service of the Lord, not their own bodies, but only what appertains to the body and is necessary for its support, when they give alms out of their earthly substance. With regard to prelates and religious superiors, we may suppose that they "cut boughs from the trees," when, for instance, they preach to their flocks concerning the faith and obedience of Abraham, the chastity of Joseph, the meekness of Moses, and the virtues which were characteristic of other saints. But these likewise contribute out of superabundant stores, and they are commanded to give freely what they have freely received (Matt. x. 8). All, however, as well they who spread their garments or strew the boughs as those that give their bodies like the beast, all, I say, have a place in the procession of the Saviour, and shall enter with Him into the holy city—provided they are faithful and diligent in discharging their several functions. For the Prophet (Ezech. xiv. 14) foresaw that three are to be saved, namely, Noe, who cuts down the boughs to build his ark; Daniel, become as the beast of burden that bore

the Saviour in the vileness of his food and the labour of his penance; and Job, who uses well his worldly substance and warms the sides of the poor with the fleeces of his flock* (Job xxxi. 20). But I think you can easily perceive for yourselves to which of these three Jesus is closest in the procession to the holy city, and which of the three is nearest to salvation.

* Cf. note at p. 388, vol. i. of present series.

SECOND SERMON FOR PALM SUNDAY.

On the Four Classes of Christians who walk in the Saviour's Procession.

"*And they brought the ass and the colt and laid their garments upon them, and made Him sit thereon . . . and the multitudes that went before and followed after cried, saying: Hosanna to the Son of David.*"—Matt. xxi. 7-9.

To-day's sermon must be briefer than usual because of the shortness of the time at our disposal. The procession which we are about to form furnishes me with a superabundance of matter, but at the same time it prevents me from discoursing at length. Soon, I say, we shall have a procession, and later on we shall listen to the passion. Now what is the purpose of so novel a combination, or what had our fathers in view when to the procession they added the recital of the passion? This is indeed the proper day for commemorating the Lord's triumphal entrance into the holy city, because this is the anniversary of the day on which that event took place: but wherefore do we to-day commemorate also the passion which was enacted, as you know, on the Friday following? Nevertheless, there is a special fittingness in this combination of the passion and the procession, for it teaches us not to rest with security upon any pleasure in this world, by showing us how "mourning taketh hold of the end of joy" (Prov. xiv. 13). Therefore, my dearest brethren, let us not be like fools who are destroyed by their prosperity (Prov. i. 32), but "in

the day of good things" let us "be not unmindful of evils" or "in the day of evils unmindful of good things" (Ecclus. xi. 27). For the present life consists of an alternation of good and evil, as well in the case of spiritual as of worldly persons. Thus we see the men of this world sometimes elated by good fortune, and sometimes cast down by adversity; and pious souls, likewise, are neither always in gladness nor always in gloom, but experience a succession of bright days and dark, according to what is written, "There was evening and morning one day" (Gen. i. 5), and again, "Thou visitest him early in the morning and Thou provest Him suddenly" (Job vii. 18). But this condition of things shall last only so long as time endures, or rather so long as the stream of time continues to flow.

This present world of time shall be succeeded by two other worlds, widely diverse and remote from each other. For in the one there shall be nothing save "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. viii. 12), and nothing in the other but "thanksgiving and the voice of praise" (Is. li. 3): for there "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away" (Apoc. xxi. 4). In this life, however, neither the lovers of the world are allowed to live without suffering many adversities, nor even with the servants of God does everything fall out in accordance with their wishes. "In the day of evils," consequently, the just are "mindful of good things," lest otherwise they should become pusillanimous and impatient, and like unto him of whom it is said in the psalm, "He will praise Thee

when Thou shalt do well to him" (Ps. xlviii. 19); and they are also mindful of evils in the day of good things, lest they should grow proud and begin to say "in their abundance: I shall never be moved" (Ps. xxix. 7). For just as his worldly prosperity destroys the worldly fool (Prov. i. 32), so too may his spiritual abundance and prosperity destroy the spiritual person who is lacking in knowledge, and therefore not truly spiritual at all. For the truly "spiritual man judgeth all things" (1 Cor. ii. 15). But how is it that prosperity ruins the fool and not also the wise man? We find the answer in Ecclesiastes, where it is written, "The heart of the wise is where there is mourning, and the heart of fools where there is mirth" (Eccles. vii. 5). Truly, then, does the same inspired author say, "It is better to go into the house of mourning, than into the house of feasting" (ibid. 3). For although adversity breaks the spirit of many, much more numerous are they whom prosperity spoils by filling their hearts with pride. Hence it is written, "A thousand shall fall at thy side," that is, at thy left side, by which we are to understand adversity, "and ten thousand at thy right hand" (Ps. xc. 7), which signifies prosperity. Moreover, that there is danger on either side we may gather from the words of the Wise Man, where he prays to the Lord, saying, "Give me neither beggary nor riches" (Prov. xxx. 8). For he feared lest riches should lift him up in pride and lest poverty should cast him down into the sin of impatience.

Here also we have the reason why the Lord willed to give us an example of humility in his procession as well as of patience in His passion. In the passion He was "led as a sheep to the slaughter, and was dumb

as a lamb before his shearer, and He opened not His mouth" (Is. liii. 7), "when He suffered He threatened not" (1 Peter ii. 23), but rather prayed for His enemies, saying, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii. 34). But what lesson does He teach us in the procession? The people were preparing to go forth to meet Him, nor was He ignorant of their purpose "for He knew what was in man" (John i. 25). Therefore He too made His preparations, and presented Himself to them, not with horses and chariots, not with silver-mounted bridles and gilded caparisons, but seated on the back of an ass's colt whereon the apostles had laid their garments, which I do not suppose were of the most costly material used in that country.

But why, it may be asked, did He will to have this triumphal procession, knowing, as He surely did, that His passion was now at hand? Perhaps it was in order that the passion might be made more bitter still by following so close upon the procession. For by the same people, in the same place, and at the same time—only a few days intervening—He was first welcomed with a triumph and afterwards nailed to the cross. Oh, how great a difference between the cries: "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him, crucify Him" (John xix. 15); and: "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest" (Matt. xxi. 9)! How great a difference between the welcoming shout: "Hosanna, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel" (John xii. 13), and the cry of repudiation, "We have no king but Caesar" (John xix. 15)! How great a difference between the green palm-branches and the cross!

between the flowers and the thorns! Only a while ago they spread their garments under His feet, and behold! they now strip Him of His own garments and cast lots to decide to whom they shall belong. Woe to you, most bitter sins of ours, for the expiation of which the Son of God had to endure such bitter torments!

Coming now to the procession, it seems to me that I can discern therein four distinct orders of participants, all of which perhaps we shall find represented in our own procession to-day. There were some who went on ahead and made ready the road. They are the persons who prepare the way of the Lord to your hearts, who govern you, and "direct your feet in the way of peace" (Luke i. 79). There were others who walked behind. In them we have a type of those who, conscious of their own ignorance, are fervent in following and faithful in adhering to the footsteps of their guides. Then, there were the disciples, who, as being more intimate with the Saviour, kept close to His side. These represent such as have "chosen the best part" (Luke x. 42), such, namely, as live to God alone in the seclusion of the cloister, always cleaving to God, and always intent upon His good pleasure. There was finally the beast of burden whereupon He sat. This animal typifies the hard-hearted and those whose minds are in some sense brutish. You will notice that this species of animal was not very numerously represented in the Saviour's procession, nor ought it to have been. For asses are wont to be employed rather for carrying burdens than for show; and their presence adds nothing to the dignity and grandeur of a triumphal procession, because they cannot contribute anything even to the music, being capable of nothing better than an

unmelodious bray (*rugitus male sonorus*). Therefore the ass in the procession is representative of ungenerous souls who are always in need of the whip and the spur. Nevertheless, not even such as these will the Lord abandon provided they are willing to submit to discipline. For it is to them the Psalmist addresses the words, "Embrace discipline, lest at any time the Lord be angry, and you perish from the just way" (Ps. ii. 12). But should the ass refuse to bear the yoke of discipline, what else has it to expect but that the Lord in His anger will drive it away? And then, wandering from the right way, it will entangle itself in those thorns and briers which choke the word of God, and which are nothing else but the riches of this world and the pleasures of the flesh (Matt. xiii. 7–22).

If there be any here amongst ourselves on whom the rule presses heavily and who find every duty a burden, so that the whip and spur have frequently to be employed to urge them on: I beg of them to make an effort to change themselves—if at all possible—from beasts of burden into men, and to take their place in some of the other three classes which constitute the procession, either with those who precede the Saviour, or with those who walk close to His side, or with those who follow after Him. But if they cannot do this, I implore of them to remain at least in the place where they are, and to submit with patience to a yoke which, if not very sweet, is nevertheless very wholesome, until it shall please the Lord to have regard to their humility (Luke i. 48) and to call them to a higher estate. But would you like me to offer some consolation to those poor asses of ours? We know that they are unable to sing; for they are not of the number of those who

can say with the Psalmist, "Thy justifications were the subject of my song in the place of my pilgrimage" (cxviii. 54). There is, however, one respect in which the ass is to be envied, in that, namely, to none other of the participants in the procession is the Lord Jesus so close. For not even the disciples who walk on either side of Him have Him so near to them as the beast upon which He is mounted. And listen to the Prophet proclaiming the same fact, "The Lord," sings holy David, "is nigh to them that are of a contrite heart" (Ps. xxxiii. 19). So will a mother cherish more fondly and more frequently embrace the child whom she perceives to be ailing. Therefore, let no one feel anger or contempt for them who wish to be Christ's beasts of burden. For whosoever shall "scandalise one of those little ones" (Luke xvii. 2), shall gravely offend the Lord, Who, like a mother, tenderly fosters them on the lap of His mercy, until they are strong enough to walk. Hence also our holy father, St. Benedict, admonishes us to bear with all patience each other's infirmities, moral as well as physical.*

There are, then, four classes of people in the procession of the Lord. Those who precede the Saviour and those who follow Him represent respectively the wise and pious and the simple and pious. I couple piety with both wisdom and simplicity, because the wise who are not also pious are impious, according to what is written, "They are wise to do evils" (Jer. iv. 22); and the simple if they are not pious are no better than fools. But in the Lord's procession there is no place either for the impious or for the fool. They that cleave to the sides of the Saviour are the contem-

* "Let them (the brethren) bear most patiently with each other's infirmities whether of body or mind."—Holy Rule lxxii. (Mt. Melleray Translation).

platives, whilst the hard-hearted and indevout are they that bear Him and are burdened with His weight. But observe that although they are all in the procession of Christ, not one of them can see His face. For those who precede Him are occupied in preparing the way, and solicitous about the sins and temptations of others. Those who follow are obviously unable to look upon His face, but, like Moses, must be content with seeing His "back parts" (Exod. xxxiii. 23). As for the poor beast upon which He is mounted, its eyes are never lifted up to contemplate its Master's face, but are always kept bent upon the ground. They who walk at His side do indeed get a momentary glimpse of His face from time to time, yet they cannot behold it fully or continually so long as the procession is in motion. Nevertheless, in comparison with the others, these can be said to see Him face to face, according to what is also written of Moses, that whereas to the other prophets God spoke in dreams and visions, He conversed with Moses face to face (Exod. xxxiii. 11). But not even Moses was able, whilst he lived in this world, to obtain his request to behold the face of God in a full and unclouded vision, because, as the Lord Himself declared, "Man shall not see Me and live" (ibid. 20). "I cannot be seen," He seems to say, "in this present life: no man shall see My face in this journey, in this procession." May He therefore grant us in His loving-kindness so to persevere in this procession whilst we live, that in that other great procession in which He and all His members shall be received by the Father, "when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God and the Father" (1 Cor. xv. 24), we also may be found worthy to enter the holy city with Him Who liveth and reigneth for ever and ever. Amen.

THIRD SERMON FOR PALM SUNDAY.

On the Lessons to be learned from the Procession of the Lord, on the Supper, the Passion, the Repose, and the Resurrection.

"*Learn of Me.*"—Matt. xi. 29.

Although God has "ordered all things in measure and number and weight" (Wisdom xi. 21), this is more particularly true of all that He did, said, and suffered during that time in which "He was seen upon earth and conversed with men" (Bar. iii. 38), all of which was so ordered that there was "not one jot or one tittle" (Matt. v. 18)—even the very least—but was charged with a special significance and full of profound mystery. But even amongst the days of His earthly life, there are five which He has made especially illustrious, this, namely, which we are now celebrating, and the four which shall soon follow: the day of His procession, the day of His last supper, the day of His passion, the day of His rest in the tomb, and the day of His resurrection. These days are for ever memorable and distinguished above all others. On the first He condescended to receive human glory, and amidst great rejoicing and general exultation entered the holy city, not on His own feet, as hitherto had been His custom, but riding on an ass. This triumph was in truth a prelude to the passion, since it greatly excited against Him the envy of the priests. But consider this, my brethren: He Who (as we are told) once fled from the crowds when they were about to "come and take

Him by force and make Him King" (John vi. 15), presents Himself to them now unsought, in order that they might welcome and acclaim Him as the King of Israel, yea, and even inspired them—as there can be no doubt He did—with the thought of so receiving and honouring Him. And you may notice the very same thing with regard to the passion. For He sometimes "went out of the temple and hid Himself" from them (John viii. 59), that is to say, from the Jews; and we read again that He "would not walk in Judaea because the Jews sought to kill Him" (John vii. 1). But afterwards, "knowing that His hour was come" (John xiii. 1), to show that He is the Master of all events, He went freely forward to meet His passion. For it was becoming that our High Priest should be "tempted in all things like as we are, without sin" (Heb. iv. 15), and that, as being a true man, He should avoid in due season and in due season accept the prosperity and the adversity which are incidental to man, so as to give us in His own Person a salutary example for our guidance in both. It is doubtless the part of temperance to shun the applause of the people and the prosperity of the world, as a rule; but sometimes and under certain circumstances justice may require us to accept them. Again, there will occasionally be circumstances of place and time in which it will be the part of prudence to flee from persecution and all temporal adversity: but whenever there is not an obligation to avoid them, they ought to be borne with fortitude.

Now these two states—I mean prosperity and adversity—make up all human existence. On the other hand, all virtue consists in the four familiar species

just referred to. It was becoming, therefore, that He should give us an example of every virtue, in Whom dwelleth all the fulness of virtue, so that it might be made manifest to all that He in the most perfect degree "knew both how to abound and how to suffer need" (Phil. iv. 12). For He Who is the Wisdom of God does not belong to the class of those that are destroyed by prosperity (Prov. i. 32), nor ought He Who is the Power of God (1 Cor. i. 24) to be numbered with them that may be broken by adversity. Both these things are written, namely, that prosperity shall destroy, not all, but only fools; and that adversity likewise brings ruin but only to the pusillanimous (ibid.).* But see how much modesty the Lord manifested in accepting this human glory, coming to receive His triumph, not with horses and chariots, but riding on an ass! And He said to the disciples, when sending them for the ass and colt, "If any man shall say anything to you, say ye that the Lord hath need of them" (Matt. xxi. 3). Great in truth was His need of them, the need He had of working out their salvation. For He came to save both men and beasts, according to the Psalmist's testimony, "Men and beasts Thou wilt save, O Lord: Oh, how Thou hast multiplied Thy mercy, O God!" (Ps. xxxv. 7, 8).† This condescension of the Saviour fostered the first

* In the Vulgate this verse runs: "Aversio parvulorum interficiet eos, et prosperitas stultorum perdet illos." St. Bernard understands the word "aversio" as equivalent to "adversitas." The Greek term is "ἐξετασμὸς" which means "a scrutiny." Cf. A Lapide's *Commentary*.—(Translator.)

† By beasts we are to understand those degraded human beings who like brute animals follow unresistingly their natural instincts: the "animal men" of whom St. Paul speaks (1 Cor. i. 14). Cf. Bellarmin on Ps. xxxv. 7, 8.—(Translator.)

beginnings of our conversion, until the first-born came forth, the child of the bond-woman (Gal. iv. 22). He who had been bound fast hitherto, either unable or unwilling to do good, or perhaps more strongly held by the double cord of powerlessness and unwillingness, was now set free at the command of the Lord (Matt. xxi. 2). But although loosed from his tether, he knows not as yet how to rejoice in the Lord with a simple intention. He feels persuaded that all his actions give pleasure to God, and believes that he is in some sense making God his debtor, often telling himself "that the Lord hath need of them," that is, of his good works. However, he will come in course of time to be concerned rather with his own indebtedness to the Lord, and to fear lest perhaps he should be found ungrateful for all His unspeakable mercies. Then shall he say what the Saviour enjoins, "I am an unprofitable servant" (Luke xvii. 10) "for Thou hast no need of my goods" (Ps. xv. 2). This is now a good and faithful disposition: it is, in fact, the son of the free-woman (Gal. iv. 22), with whom "the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir" (ibid. 30). Therefore, let the same be our disposition in to-day's procession.

But before entering upon His passion the Lord, as a most affectionate father of a family, took care to provide nourishment for His household; and in this also "the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared" (Titus iii. 4). For "having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end" (John xiii. 1); "and He said to them: With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer" (Luke xxii. 15). Food was indeed very necessary for them at that time. For Satan desired that

he might " sift them as wheat " (Luke xxii. 31) ; hence they had need to be strengthened with food beforehand. If they even succumbed so soon after refection, what would have become of them had they been fasting ? And He refreshed not only their bodies, but their hearts also, yea, and especially their hearts, because it was a spiritual rather than a corporal passion that awaited them : He alone was to suffer in body at this time, according to what He had predicted in the psalm, " I am alone whilst I am passing " (Ps. cxl. 10). And as He was the only Victim That could avail to redeem us, so He alone sufficed. It would have been injurious to the glory of Christ, had Peter, or James, or John suffered with Him for the salvation of men. There were indeed two others crucified with Him, but they were two robbers, as to whom no suspicion could possibly arise that their passion was intended to supply for the inadequacy of His.

With what bread, therefore, did the Saviour feed His apostles at the last supper ? As it seems to me, He offered them five different loaves. " My meat," said He, " is to do the will of Him That sent Me " (John iv. 34). That certainly is food, but the food of the heart. For what else is there that can so strengthen and fortify the heart of man (Ps. ciii. 15), what else can so comfort and sustain it in its every necessity as the thought of having accomplished the divine will, transmitted as spiritual food to the stomach of the soul, that is to say, to the conscience ? So too, it is only he whose " heart is withered because he hath forgotten to eat his bread " (Ps. ci. 5), it is only such a one that can be ignorant that the words of God in exhortation, the

consolation of His promises, and the tears shed in prayer are all bread of the heart. But above all, the Flesh of Christ is "meat indeed" (John vi. 56), "the Bread of life" (ibid. 48), "the living Bread Which came down from heaven" (ibid. 51). Now you will find, if you examine carefully, that none of these various kinds of spiritual food was wanting at this most solemn supper of the Lord. Whilst the apostles were still seated, He rose from the table, girded Himself with a towel, poured water into a vessel, washed their feet, and wiped them with the towel wherewith He was girded (John xiii. 4, 5). This assuredly was not the will of flesh and blood, but the will of the Father and our sanctification (1 Thess. iv. 3). For when Peter was strongly opposing His action, the Lord said to him, "If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with Me" (John xiii. 8). And we know Who it was That said, "Him that cometh to Me I will not cast out, because I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him That sent Me" (John vi. 37, 38). Seasonably then, and indeed according to His custom, He added exhortation to example. In this discourse —which was of unusual length—He took care, on account of the imminence of His passion, to comfort and encourage the apostles with many promises concerning His resurrection, the coming of the Paraclete, their own confirmation in the faith, and their final assumption to Himself. After the exhortation and the promises, He turned to prayer, "and being in an agony He prayed the longer" (Luke xxii. 43), repeating His prayer twice. During this prayer, He seems to have wept not alone with His eyes, but with all His members, so that His whole mystical body, which is the Church,

might be washed with the tears shed by His whole natural Body. But as to the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, every Christian knows that this most precious and incomparable food was also set before the disciples, and for the first time, at the same supper, and that they were commanded to partake of it frequently thereafter.

Soon after the supper came the day of the passion, on which, in order that He might "heal the whole man" (John vii. 23), He made of His whole Self a saving Victim, exposing His Body to the most atrocious torments and injuries and surrendering His Soul to a twofold affection of most tender compassion, grieving at one time over the inconsolable sorrow of the holy women, at another over the despair and dispersion of His disciples. These four kinds of suffering constituted the cross of the Lord, and for our sakes He endured them all, because of the infinite love wherewith He compassionated our misery. Nevertheless, as He said to the women who wept for Him, the things concerning Him were to have an end (Luke xxii. 37), a most speedy and glorious end, first in the repose of the tomb, and secondly in His resurrection from the dead. And with regard to ourselves also, my brethren, if we are in haste to enter into our rest, let us not forget that it is only "through many tribulations" (Acts xiv. 21) we can expect to reach that goal. It does indeed seem to us, whilst actually enduring tribulation, that this rest is itself sufficiently great to satisfy all our desires, and that once it has been attained we shall want nothing more. Nevertheless, not even in this rest shall we enjoy perfect repose, because we shall still be disquieted by the longing for the resur-

rection and glorification of the body. "From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours" (Apoc. xiv. 13). Consequently "the dead who die in the Lord" (ibid.) are at rest from labour. But not yet have they rest from desire.* For we also read that "the souls of them that were slain for the word of God" cry aloud in prayer before His throne (Apoc. vi. 9, 10): because although they suffer no pain, their happiness will not be entirely full and perfect until for them also the sabbath is succeeded by the pasch. Amen.

* Cf. vol. i. p. 323, note.

SERMON FOR SPY WEDNESDAY.

On the Lord's Passion.

Greater love than this no man hath that a man lay down his life for his friends."—John xv. 13.

Be vigilant in mind, brethren, so that you may not fail to profit by the mysteries of the passing time. Very abundant are the graces now being offered. Come with clean vessels to receive them: present devout minds, watchful senses, chaste affections, and pure consciences, for so great a largess of the divine bounty. Such special vigilance at this holy season is required of you, not only by the particular manner of life which you have embraced, but also by the general practice of the Church whose children you are. For during the present hallowed week all Christians, with more than their ordinary fervour, practise piety, give example of modesty, cultivate humility, put on gravity, in order to show in some way how they compassionate the sufferings of Christ. Who indeed can be so irreligious as not to be softened to sorrow during these blessed days? Who so proud as not to feel humble? Who so vindictive as not to forgive? Who so self-indulgent as not to deprive himself? Who so sensual as not to practise self-restraint? Who so hardened in evil as not to repent? We have a right to expect such a general conversion of heart, because we are now

approaching the passion of the Lord, which is as capable to-day as at the beginning of shaking the earth, of rending the rocks, and of opening the sepulchres (Mark xxvii. 51, 52). We are also drawing near to the day of His resurrection, whereon we shall celebrate a solemn feast to the Lord Most High. And would to God we were able to rise in fervour and alacrity of soul even to " the highest great things He hath done " (Ps. lxx. 19) ! For here upon earth nothing better could be done than that which hath been accomplished by the Lord in these days. Nothing better or more profitable could be recommended to mortals than that they should celebrate annually with a perpetual rite and with " longing of soul the remembrance thereof " (Is. xxvi. 8), and should " publish the memory of the abundance of Thy sweetness," O Lord (Ps. cxliv. 7). And both the passion and the resurrection are for our sakes, since in both we find for ourselves the fruit of salvation, in both " the life of our spirit " (Is. xxxviii. 16). Wonderfully efficacious is Thy passion, Lord Jesus, which has put to flight the passions of all of us, which has made atonement for all our iniquities, and is found an unfailing remedy for every disease of our souls. For what sickness can be so much unto death as to be incapable of cure by that death of Thine ?

Now, my brethren, in the passion of the Saviour, there are three things in particular which demand our consideration : what He suffered, the manner in which He suffered, and the cause of His suffering. In the first, we have commended to us patience ; in the second, humility, and charity in the third. Incomparable indeed was the patience He showed when

" the wicked wrought upon His back " (Ps. cxxviii. 3), when His Body was so extended on the cross that all His bones might be numbered (Ps. xxi. 18), when that strong Tower which defended Israel was pierced through on every side, when His Hands and Feet were digged (ibid. 17) : because He was " led as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before his shearer He opened not His mouth " (Is. liii. 7), neither murmuring against the Father Who sent Him to suffer, nor against the human race, for whose sake He paid back what He took not away (Ps. lxviii. 5), nor even against His own peculiar people, from whom He received so much evil in return for so much goodness. There are some persons who, when made to suffer for their sins, submit with all humility, and this is reputed to them unto patience (Gen. xv. 6). There are others who have to endure affliction, not so much in satisfaction for sin, as for their trial and the increase of their merit, and this is accepted and commended in them as a more perfect patience. Surely, then, patience must be supposed to have reached its highest possible perfection in Christ, Who " in the lot of His inheritance " (Ps. civ. 11), was condemned to a most cruel death as a robber by that very people to whom He had come as in a special sense their Saviour : and that although He was absolutely free from all sin, both personal and original, and even incapable of advancing in merit or grace. For He it is " in Whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead—not in any mystical manner, but—corporally " (Col. ii. 9), in Whom God abideth, not in figure but substantially, " reconciling the world to Himself " (2 Cor. v. 19), Who, finally, is " full of grace and truth " (John i. 14), not co-

operatively but personally,* that so He may accomplish His work : " His work which is strange to Him," as says the Prophet Isaias (Is. xxviii. 21). That is to say, it is really His work because the Father gave it to Him to do (John xvii. 4), and yet it is strange or foreign to Him, because the sufferings and humiliations of the passion were so little in keeping with His Divine Majesty. In this way, then, has He given us an example of patience in what He suffered.

If you now consider with care the manner in which He suffered, you will acknowledge Him to be not only meek but also humble of heart (Matt. xi. 29). For " in humility His judgment was taken away " (Is. liii. 8) when to blasphemies so dreadful and accusations so false He made no reply. " We have seen Him," says the Prophet, " and there was no sightliness in Him " (ibid. 2) : He was no longer " beautiful above the sons of men " (Ps. xliv. 3), but rather " the

* " Qui denique plenus est gratiae et veritatis, non cooperative sed personaliter." This may mean that the fulness of grace in Christ was due, not to His co-operation with a first grace bestowed—since the Saint has just told us that for Christ there was no possibility of growth in grace (cf. St. Thomas, III., vii. 12)—but to the hypostatic union of His Humanity with the Person of the Word. Or it may mean that Christ's fulness of grace was not any quality or habit superadded to His Soul as a co-operating principle, but the very Person of the Word. In this sense Hurter says, " It is the unanimous teaching of theologians that Christ was sanctified by *substantial sanctity* . . . and this is what the Fathers mean when they affirm that the Sacred Humanity was anointed by the *Divinity Itself*, not, as in the case of other holy persons, by any *operation* of the Divinity " (*Theol. Dogm.*, ii. 412). And he quotes Antoine as saying, " The Humanity of Christ was sanctified formally by the Person of the Word " (ibid.). St. Bernard himself tells us in his sermon on the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin that the fulness of grace was in Christ as in its fountain, in Mary as in its conduit, in the saints as in streams and rivulets. Cf. St. Thomas, P. III. q. vii. a. 1, 10-12 ; Suarez, xvii. p. xxii. s. 2.—(Translator.)

reproach of men and the outcast of the people" (Ps. xxi. 7), "despised and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows . . . as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted," so that now there was "no beauty in Him nor comeliness" (Is. liii. 2-4). O most abject and most exalted! Most humble and most sublime! The reproach of men and the glory of the angels! No man is loftier than He, nor yet is there any more lowly. For He was all defiled with spittle, was "saturated with reproaches" (Jer. Lam. iii. 30), was "condemned to a most shameful death" (Wisdom ii. 20), "and was reputed with the wicked" (Is. liii. 12). And shall such humility, carried to such a degree, yea, carried beyond all degrees and measures: shall such humility be held to merit nothing? Therefore the humility of Christ was as wonderful as was His patience, and both were equally incomparable.

Besides, both His humility and His patience will appear much more magnificent when considered in connection with His charity, which was their cause. Because "on account of His exceeding charity wherewith He (God) hath loved us" (Ephes. ii. 4), in order to redeem a slave the Father "spared not even His own Son" (Rom. viii. 32), nor did the Son spare Himself. Exceeding in truth was that charity, because it went beyond all measure, transgressed all limits, proved itself superior to every other affection. "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John xv. 13). But Thou Thyself, O Lord Jesus, hast shown a greater love in laying down Thy life, not for Thy friends, but for Thine enemies. For "when we were as yet enemies, we were reconciled" by Thy death to God the Father and to Thyself

(Rom. v. 10). What other charity, therefore, can be anywhere found comparable to this, whether in the past, or in the present, or in the future? "Scarce for a just man will one die" (Rom. v. 7): but Thou hast endured Thy passion for the unjust and died for our sins, Who didst come to justify sinners by Thy grace, to make servants Thy brethren, captives Thy co-heirs, and to set exiles upon thrones in Thy kingdom. There is no other circumstance which so enhances the glory of Christ's patience and humility as the fact that "He hath delivered His Soul unto death and hath borne the sins of many and hath prayed for the transgressors" (Is. liii. 12) "that they might not perish" (Wisdom xviii. 19). "A faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation" (1 Tim. i. 15). For "He was offered because it was His own will" (ibid. 7). Observe that He was not only offered willingly, but was offered *because* He willed it. He alone had power to lay down His life: no man could take it away from Him: He offered it of His own will. "When He had taken the vinegar, He said: It is consummated" (John xix. 30). That is to say: all is fulfilled; nothing further remains to be done; there is nothing more to detain Me in this mortal life. "And bowing His Head"—to show that He was "obedient unto death" (Phil. ii. 8)—"He gave up the ghost" (John xix. 30). Who else has ever had this power of resigning himself when he wished to the sleep of death? The liability to death, my brethren, is undoubtedly a great weakness of our nature: but to die in this manner is a proof of almighty power. For "the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Cor. i. 25). It is indeed true that men are sometimes mad enough to lay criminal hands on their

own lives. But that is not to lay down their lives: it is rather to subject them to violence and to break them by force than to lay them down at will. Thou, O impious Judas, didst certainly possess the unhappy power, not indeed of laying down thy life, but of hanging thyself; and it was not thine own will but the pressure of the rope that caused thy most wicked spirit to take its flight, rather torn from thee than dismissed at thy pleasure. He alone "hath delivered His Soul unto death" Who alone by His own power hath returned to life. He alone had the power to lay down His life Who alone had the power to take it up again, being absolute Master both of life and of death.

Worthy, therefore, is that charity so amiable, that humility so admirable, that patience so insuperable; worthy beyond doubt is that "holy and unspotted Victim," so acceptable to God; worthy is "the Lamb That was slain to receive power" (Apoc. v. 12), to accomplish that for which He came, to "take away the sin of the world" (John i. 29). Now I affirm that the sin which prevailed upon the earth was threefold. You suspect, I suppose, that I am alluding to "the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John ii. 16)? We have here in truth, a threefold cord, and "a threefold cord is not easily broken" (Eccles. iv. 12). Therefore many draw this triple cord of vanity, or perhaps I should have said that many are drawn by it. But—as indeed it is only natural to anticipate—the previously mentioned triple cord of virtues prevails in the elect. For how can the recollection of Christ's patience fail to exclude all sensual delight? How can the con-

sideration of His humility fail to repress in us the pride of life ? And as for His charity, the very thought of it ought so to occupy the mind and so to engage all the faculties of the soul as to extinguish completely the concupiscence of the eyes, which is the vice of curiosity. Thus the Saviour's passion supplies us with three efficacious antidotes against the three cardinal vices of the world.

But besides this triple concupiscence there are three kinds of sin, and I have been thinking of explaining to you how they also are effaced by the power of the cross. I think you will derive greater profit from such a discussion. First, there is original sin ; secondly, what I would call personal sin ; and thirdly the singular sin of Deicide. By original sin is meant that most grievous sin which has been transmitted to us from the first Adam, " in whom we have all sinned " (Rom. v. 12), and because of whom we are all made liable to death : a most grievous sin, undoubtedly, since it has so completely corrupted, not alone the entire human race, but even every individual member of the human race, so that there has been none left untouched by it, no, not so much as one.* From the first of men to the last it extends its malign influence ; and in each individual human person its poison is diffused " from the sole of the foot unto the top of the head " (Is. i. 6). In another sense also it is universal, in that, namely, it occupies every stage of our human existence, from

* In spite of the emphasis, these words must manifestly be understood " exceptis excipiendis." The Saint assuredly did not intend to include the Sacred Humanity of Christ. For the evidence that he was no opponent of Mary's Immaculate Conception, see *Sermons on the Canticle of Canticles* (Mt. Melleray Translation), vol. i. p. 253, vol. ii. p. 427.—(Translator)

the day when our mothers conceived us until the day of our restoration to our common mother, the earth. How otherwise can it be true what is written, "A heavy yoke is upon the children of Adam from the day of their coming out of their mother's womb until the day of their burial into the mother of all" (Ecclus. xl. 1)? We are conceived in shame, fostered in darkness, brought forth in sorrow. Before birth we burden our unhappy mothers, and we rend them like vipers in the very act of being born: the wonder is that we are not rent ourselves. Our first utterance is a wail of woe, which is nothing surprising, since we have entered now the valley of tears. Thus, the words of holy Job are perfectly applicable to us, "Man, born of a woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries" (Job xiv. 1). How true this is we have been taught not by words alone but also by bitter experience. "Man. born of a woman," says the Patriarch. What could be more humiliating? And lest we should perhaps feel inclined to console ourselves with the thought of the bodily pleasures to be found in sensible things, here, at our very entrance into the world, we receive a terrible admonition of our exit therefrom, when it is added, "living for a short time." Furthermore, lest we should suppose that even the short space intervening between our entrance and our exit shall be free for our enjoyment, we hear the words, "filled with many miseries." Yes, indeed, "man is filled with many miseries," many and multiform, miseries of body and miseries of mind, miseries in his sleep and miseries in his wakefulness, miseries whithersoever he turns. For even Christ Himself, born of a Virgin, yea, "made of a woman" (Gal. iv. 4), but of one "blessed among

women " (Luke i. 42), Christ, Who said to His Mother, " Woman, behold thy son " (John xix. 26), even Christ, " living for a short time " upon earth, was " filled with many miseries," being pursued by plots, insultingly interrogated, subjected to injuries, tortured with chastisements, laden with reproaches.

Have you any doubts, my brethren, as to the sufficiency of Christ's obedience to atone for all the guilt of the primeval transgression? Indeed, it is more than sufficient, because " not as the offence, so also is the gift. For judgment indeed was by one unto condemnation: but grace is of many offences unto justification " (Rom. v. 16). Great assuredly was the malice of that first sin, which had power to corrupt not only the person who committed it, but even the very nature to which he belonged. Nevertheless, for each individual more grievous than the guilt he inherits from Adam is that which he owes to himself, when he now recklessly " yields his members as instruments of iniquity unto sin " (Rom. vi. 13), no longer held captive by the sin of another, but by his own personal fault. But gravest of all is the third kind of sin, committed against the Person of the Lord of Majesty, when wicked men wickedly slew the Just One (Acts vii. 52), when the most cruel of homicides, nay, rather of deicides—if it is allowable to use the word—laid sacrilegious hands on the Son of God Himself. What comparison can there be between either of the other kinds of sin and this, which appalled and convulsed the whole universe and well nigh threw the world back again into the chaos whence it was drawn? Suppose a certain nobleman has invaded with a hostile army and laid waste the territory of his king; and suppose another who, after

being admitted to the table and to the council of his royal master, with a traitor's hand has strangled the monarch's only son : does not the former appear almost innocent and undeserving of punishment as compared with the latter ? So, my brethren, is every other sin in comparison with the sin of deicide. And nevertheless even this sin He took upon Himself Who made Himself " sin " for our sakes, He Who knew no sin (2 Cor. v. 21), in order that " of sin He might condemn sin in the flesh " (Rom. viii. 3). For by means of this sin both original and actual sin have been blotted out : yea, this sin of deicide has been the means of destroying itself.*

I have now an argument which, by proving the destruction of the most heinous kind of sin, proves the same *a fortiori* of the two less grievous kinds. My argument is this. The Lord Jesus " hath borne the sins of many and hath prayed for the transgressors" " that they might not perish," saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do " (Luke xxiii. 34). Thy irrevocable word has gone forth, O Lord, and " it shall not return to Thee void, but it shall do whatsoever Thou mayest please and shall prosper in the things for which Thou hast sent it " (Is. lv. 11). " Behold ye now the works of the Lord, what wonders He hath done upon the earth " (Ps. xlv. 9). He was scourged, crowned with thorns, pierced with nails, hung upon a cross, saturated with reproaches : and nevertheless, forgetful of all His sufferings, He cried out, " Father forgive them." On the one side are the many miseries of His Body, on the other, the many mercies of His

* Cf. *Treatise on Consideration*, pp. 247-249 (Mt. Melleray Translation).

Heart; here bitter pain, there tender compassion; within the "oil of gladness" (Ps. xliv. 8), without the "drops of Blood trickling down upon the ground" (Luke xxii. 44). The mercies of the Lord are many (2 Kings xxiv. 14), but many also are the miseries of the Lord. Shall the miseries vanquish the mercies, or shall the mercies prevail over the miseries? Let thine "ancient mercies" (Ps. lxxxviii. 50), O Lord, have the victory: let wisdom conquer malice (Wisdom vii. 30). Great indeed is the wickedness of Thine enemies: but is not Thy mercy much greater, O Lord? Yes, "much in every way" (Rom. iii. 2). "Shall evil be rendered for good?" He asked by the mouth of the Prophet, "because they have digged a pit for My Soul" (Jer. xviii. 20). Truly they dug for Him the pit of impatience, exposing Him to many and most grievous temptations to anger. But what was their little pit in comparison with the bottomless abyss of His meekness? Rendering evil for good, they dug a pit for His Soul. But charity is not easily entrapped, is not easily thrown down; "charity never falleth away" (1 Cor. xiii. 8), never plunges into a pit, and requites evil with multiplied good. God forbid that "dying flies should spoil the sweetness of the ointment" (Eccles. x. 1) which flows from Thy Heart, O Lord Jesus! For in Thy Heart "there is mercy" and in Thy Heart also "plentiful redemption" (Ps. cxxix. 7). The sufferings Thou endurest are the "dying flies," and the blasphemies uttered against Thee are also "dying flies," and "dying flies," too, are the insults heaped upon Thee by "a perverse and exasperating generation" (Ps. lxxvii. 8).

But Thou, O Lord, what dost Thou do? At the very

time when Thy hands are lifted up upon the cross, when the morning sacrifice is becoming now the evening holocaust (Exod. xxix.), in the power of that incense which has ascended to heaven, which has covered the earth, and perfumed even the nether world, Thou dost cry aloud, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," and art heard for Thy reverence (Heb. v. 7). Oh, how bountiful Thou art to forgive! (Is. lv. 7). "Oh, how great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord!" (Ps. xxx. 20). Oh, how different are Thy thoughts from our thoughts! (Is. lv. 8). Oh, how fully is thy mercy confirmed even upon the wicked! (Ps. cxvi. 2). What a wonderful thing it is! The Lord Jesus, on the one hand, cries out, "Father, forgive them"; on the other hand the Jews vociferate, "Crucify Him, crucify Him" (Luke xxiii. 21). "His words are smoother than oil" (Ps. liv. 22), but theirs are like darts (ibid.). O charity, patient and compassionate! For "charity is patient" (1 Cor. xiii. 4), and that is sufficient; charity is kind also (ibid.), and that is perfection. "Be not overcome by evil" (Rom. xii. 21)—there is abounding charity, "but overcome evil by good" (ibid.)—there you have charity superabounding. For it was not the patience alone but the "benignity of God" that led the Jews to penance (Rom. ii. 4); because charity that is benignant loves even those whom it suffers from, and loves them with ardour. Patient charity dissembles the faults of the sinner, it awaits his repentance and bears with him meanwhile. But benignant charity draws him, leads him on, and "causeth him to be converted from the error of his way" (James v. 20); for benignant "charity covereth a multitude of sins" (1 Peter iv. 8). You

are stones, O ye Jews, but you have struck against a softer stone, calling forth therefrom the sweet sound of mercy and the oil of charity (Deut. xxxii. 13). Good Jesus, how Thou wilt make them that desire Thee to "drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure" (Ps. xxxv. 9), since Thou dost so saturate with the oil of Thy mercy even those who nailed Thee to the cross!

It is clear, then, that the passion of Christ is abundantly efficacious to exhaust all sins of every kind (Heb. ix. 28). But how can I be sure that it has been offered for me? Most certainly it has been offered for me, because it could not have been offered for anyone else. Might it not have been offered for the angels, perhaps you will say? But the angels had no need of it. Or for the demons? But they had no capacity to avail of it. Hence it is written, "He (Christ Jesus) emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness—not of the angels, nor (God forbid!) of the demons, but—of men, and in habit found as a man" (Phil. ii. 7). He was by nature the Son and He made Himself a servant. And not only did He assume the form of a servant in order that He might bear the yoke with us, but He assumed the form of a wicked servant in order that He might suffer in our stead, of the "servant of sin" (John viii. 34) in order to pay the penalty of sin, whereas in Him sin had no place. Notice how the Apostle does not say, "in the likeness of man," but in "the likeness of men." The reason is, because the first man was created neither in the reality of sinful flesh nor "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. viii. 3), whereas Christ willed to immerse Himself truly and profoundly in all our human miseries, so that the

devil's keen eye might not be able to discover that "great mystery of godliness" (1 Tim. iii. 16). "In habit," therefore, and in every habit, He was "found as a man," nor in what belonged to His Human Nature, did He appear in anything distinguished from the rest of men. It was indeed because He was so completely "in habit found as a man" that He was crucified. He manifested His Divinity to a few in order that there might be some who believed, but to the rest He remained hidden, "for if they had known, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. ii. 8). Another reason why He thus associated ignorance to the sin of the deicides was this: in order that such ignorance might afford Him some shadow of an excuse for pardoning them.

The first Adam, he who "hid himself from the face of the Lord God" (Gen. iii. 8), left us two things as an inheritance, viz., labour and sorrow: labour in action, sorrow in suffering. He himself knew nothing of either in the paradise of pleasure which he was given "to dress it and to keep it" (ibid. ii. 15), to dress it with delight and to keep it with fidelity, both for himself and for his descendants. But Thou, O Lord Jesus, didst "consider labour and sorrow that Thou mightest deliver them into Thy hands" (Ps. x., juxta Heb. 14), or rather that Thou mightest deliver Thyself into their hands, being "stuck fast in the mire of the deep" (Ps. lxviii. 3), so that these "waters came in even unto Thy Soul" (ibid. 2). Hear how He prays to the Father: "See My abjection and My sorrow" (Ps. xxiv. 18), because "I am poor and in labours from My youth" (Ps. lxxxviii. 16). He hath laboured in patience, as the Prophet bears witness

(Is. i. 14); "His hands have served in" labours (Ps. lxxx. 7). Listen now to what He says about sorrow: "O all ye that pass by the way, attend and see if there be any sorrow like to My sorrow" (Jer. Lam. i. 12). "Surely He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows" (Is. liii. 4), a "Man of sorrows" (ibid. 3), poor and afflicted, "tempted in all things like as we are, without sin" (Heb. iv. 15). During His mortal life He experienced the pain of labour, and endured at His death the labour of pain, whilst He "wrought salvation in the midst of the earth" (Ps. lxxiii. 12). Therefore, so long as I live I shall be mindful of all the labours He endured in His preaching, of the fatigue of His journeyings, of His temptations and fastings, of His watchings in prayer, of His tears of compassion. Never shall I forget the sorrows He experienced, the revilings He had to bear, the spittings, the blows, the mockeries, the reproaches, the nails, and all the countless afflictions which came upon and overwhelmed Him. His fortitude is a support to me, I am also advantaged by His resemblance to me in suffering, yet so if I am willing to follow His example and to walk in His footsteps. Otherwise, at my hand also shall be required "the just Blood That hath been shed upon the earth" (Matt. xxiii. 35), and I shall be considered a sharer in the unparalleled sin of the Jews, because, namely, I shall have shown myself ungrateful for such an excess of charity, because I shall have "offered an affront to the spirit of grace," because I shall have "esteemed the Blood of the testament unclean" (Heb. x. 29), because I shall have trampled on the Son of God.

There are multitudes who endure labour and pain,

yet rather from necessity than by the choice of their own will. Such as these are not conformed to the image of the Son of God (Rom. viii. 29). And there are some who submit to these things voluntarily, and who, nevertheless, have neither part nor lot in Christ. The profligate watches the whole night long, not alone with patience, but even with pleasure, in order that he may be able to satisfy his wicked desire; the brigand watches, sword in hand, to despoil the traveller; the thief watches in order to break into the rich man's house. But the toil and trouble of these and of all other such persons have nothing in common with the labour and pain which Christ has consecrated. There are, however, men of good will, who, from the sole desire of Christian perfection, exchange riches for poverty, or at least if they do not actually possess riches they renounce the hope thereof, leaving all things for the sake of Him Who left all things for their sake (Luke xviii. 28), and these follow Him "whithersoever He goeth" (Apoc. xiv. 4). As for myself, if I thus follow the Saviour, I find in this the strongest of proofs that His passion and the resemblance of His Humanity to mine have not been without profit to me. And this, my brethren, is the relish, this is the fruit to be found in the endurance of labour and sorrow.

See, therefore, O man, what great things the Majesty of God hath done for thee (Ps. cxxv. 3). With regard to all the things that are in heaven or under heaven, He merely "spoke and they were made, He commanded and they were created" (Ps. cxlviii. 5). What is easier than to speak a word? But although He created thee with a mere word, was it with a mere word

thou wast recreated? For three and thirty years "He was seen upon earth and conversed with men" (Bar. iii. 38), who only took occasion from His actions and words to slander and insult Him; and to such straits was He reduced that He "had not where to lay His Head" (Matt. viii. 20). Wherefore this? Because the Word had put aside, as it were, the subtlety of His Divine Nature and assumed to Himself a coarser form. For He was made flesh, and consequently could no longer act (if I may so speak) with the same swiftness and delicacy as when He created the world. But just as our human thought clothes itself in sensible sound without the least diminution of its essence either before or after expression; so did the Son of God unite Himself to flesh without subjecting His Divinity to any degradation or to any composition with foreign elements, either before or after the Incarnation. In the bosom of the Father He was invisible, whereas here upon earth "our hands have handled of the Word of life," and "that which was from the beginning . . . we have seen with our eyes" (1 John i. 1). This Divine Word, however, because He had assumed to Himself a most pure Body and a most holy Soul, regulated freely His bodily actions: for not only was He Wisdom and Justice by essence, but He was entirely free from any "law in His members fighting against the law of His mind" * (Rom. vii. 23). With regard to my word,

* "God Who took flesh in the Virgin's womb, and came into this world without sin, could suffer in Himself no contradiction. It was possible for Him to be tempted by suggestion, but His mind never experienced the pleasure of sin" (St. Gregory the Great, Hom. 16 in Evang.). Cf. St. Thomas, p. III. q. xv 2.—(Translator.

it is neither wisdom nor justice; nevertheless it is capable of both: both may be either united or at variance with it, although the latter more easily. For it is more our custom to obey the vices of the flesh than to regulate its actions and passions, owing to the fact that we are prone to evil in every age from our youth (Gen. viii. 21), and pursue our guilty pleasures in the face of whips and swords, yea, under the very dart of death.

Happy the man whose thought—for our thought is our word—directs all his operations according to the rule of righteousness, so that there may be purity in the intention and rectitude in the action! Happy he who supports his bodily afflictions for justice sake, so that whatever he suffers, he suffers for the sake of the Son of God, Who is essential Justice, excluding all impatience from his heart, and sounding forth from his mouth only thanksgiving and the voice of praise (Is. li. 3)! Whosoever lifts himself up in this manner can also, like the palsied man in the Gospel, take up his bed and go into his house (Mark ii. 11). Our bed is our body in which we formerly lay languid, the slaves of our desires and our lusts. But we now have taken it up and are bearing it as a burden, being obliged to obey the spirit: we carry our dead, for "the body indeed is dead because of sin" (Rom. viii. 10). We only walk, however, we do not run: "for the corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth upon many things" (Wisdom ix. 15). We also are going to our house. Do you ask, to what house? The house of the grave in the earth, the "mother of all" (Ecclus. xli.), for it is written, "Their

sepulchres shall be their houses for ever" (Ps. xlviii. 12); or rather that house which "we have of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven" (2 Cor. v. 1). Now if we are able to walk under such a burden, what do you suppose we shall do when we are relieved of that burden? Shall we not run? Shall we not fly? Yea, and "upon the wings of the winds" (Ps. xvii. 11). My brethren, the Lord Jesus has embraced us by taking upon Himself our labours and sorrows; let us in return embrace Him with the two arms, so to speak, of patience and purity of intention, by acting and suffering for justice, sake, by directing our actions according to the rule of justice, and by bearing our sorrows for the love of justice. Let us also say with the Spouse in the Canticle, "I held Him and I will not let Him go" (Cant. iii. 4). And let us say to Him with the Patriarch, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me" (Gen. xxxii. 26). For what more remains now but the blessing? What but the kiss remains after the embrace? Oh, if I cleave thus closely to my God, surely I may be permitted to cry out with the Spouse, "Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His mouth" (Cant. i. 1). Meantime, "feed us, O Lord, with the bread of tears and give us for our drink tears in measure" (Ps. lxxix. 6), until Thou hast brought us to that "good measure and pressed down, and shaken together and running over which Thou wilt give into our bosoms" (Luke vi. 38), Thou Who art Thyself "in the bosom of the Father" (John i. 18) and over all things God blessed for ever. Amen.

SERMON FOR HOLY THURSDAY.

On the Effects of Baptism, Holy Communion, and the Washing of the Feet.

"If I wash thee not thou shalt have no part with Me."
—John xiii. 8.

These, my brethren, are days which we ought to spend holily; they are days full of piety and grace, capable of exciting to penance the souls of even the most abandoned sinners. So great indeed is the power of the mysteries commemorated at this time that it can pierce even hearts of stone, yea, can even soften breasts of iron. For to this day we behold the effects of Christ's passion, not only in the manifestations of sympathy by the celestial spheres, but also in the quaking of the earth, in the rending of the rocks, in the opening of the sepulchres by the confession of sin (Matt. xxvii. 51, 52). Now, amongst spiritual aliments, as amongst corporeal, there are some which yield their relish easily and at once, and some which require to be first masticated. That is to say, there are certain truths and moral lessons which, as being sufficiently evident to all, do not need elucidation, and certain others which demand the most diligent inquiry to penetrate the obscurity that surrounds them. No mother will reach her child an unbroken nut, but will first break the shell and offer him the meat. So ought I, my dearest brethren, if only I had the power, to make manifest to your minds whatever is wrapped in mystery. But as that is impossible, let us beg of

wisdom as a good mother to break these nuts, both for me and for you, these nuts, I mean, which are the fruit of that priestly rod, of that "rod of power" which the Lord hath "sent forth out of Sion" (Ps. cix. 2). There are many mysteries or sacraments which might be discussed with profit, but the shortness of the time will not allow the investigation of all. Perhaps, too, it would overtax the powers of some amongst you. Therefore, I shall confine my remarks to three sacraments, which are particularly relevant to the present time, and concerning them I shall communicate to you whatsoever the Lord may vouchsafe to inspire me with.

By a sacrament is understood a sacred sign or a sacred mystery.* Many things are done solely for their own sakes and without any ulterior significance; many other things are done for the purpose of designating what lies beyond themselves, and such are called and are truly signs. To take a familiar example: suppose a person offers a ring to another, intending nothing more than to make a present of the ring: his action has no significance. But suppose the ring is given as a title to an inheritance: it is now a sign, so that the recipient can say: "The ring, it is true, has not much intrinsic value, but it represents the property which I covet." In this way, therefore, the Lord, on the eve of His passion, took care to invest His followers

* The Saint is here taking the word sacrament in a generic sense, so as to include what are now called sacramentals. This was the common practice in his time. Hence St. Peter Damien enumerates fifteen sacraments, Hugh of St. Victor a still greater number, and even St. Thomas calls the oblations and tithes of the Old Law by the name of sacraments (p. III. q. lxv. a. 1, ad 7). The Council of Trent fulminates an anathema against whosoever shall maintain that the sacraments of the Church are more or fewer than seven (s. 7, c. i). Cf. Billuart, viii. 369-70.—(Translator.)

with a title to His grace, so that a visible sign might become the channel for the communication of invisible grace to our souls. This indeed is the end for which all the sacraments have been instituted; this is the purpose of the Eucharistic Communion, of the washing of the feet,* and of holy baptism, the first of the sacraments of Christ, in which "we have been planted together in the likeness of His death" (Rom. vi. 5), and which, in its triple immersion,† bears a resemblance to the triduum which we are now celebrating. As in sensible things there are different signs—thus, to keep to the example I have taken, there are various kinds of investiture differing one from another according to the variety of the offices or dignities, wherewith men are invested, a book being used in the investiture of canons, a crozier in the investiture of abbots, and a ring with the crozier in the investiture of bishops—so in things spiritual "diversities of graces" (1 Cor. xii. 4) are communicated in different sacraments. What then is the grace with which we are invested by baptism? It is manifestly the purgation of our sins. "Who can make him clean that is conceived of unclean seed" (Job xiv. 4) save only God Who alone is clean and Who alone is inaccessible to sin? The grace of this sacrament was dispensed under the Old Law by means of circumcision wherein the rust of original guilt, derived from our first parents, was scraped away with the knife of stone (Jos. v. 3). But at the coming of Christ, Who is a Lamb full of sweetness and kindness, Whose very yoke is sweet and His burden light (Matt. xi. 30),

* Cf. Billuart, loc. cit., also Hurter, *Theol. Dogm.*, vol. iii n. 348.

† Mode of baptism still common in St. Bernard's time.

a most welcome change took place, for, instead of the former painful remedy, water with the unction of the Holy Spirit began to be used to wash out the inherited stain.

But perhaps some of you will say to me: "If the sin which we all contracted from our first parents has been washed away in baptism, how is it that we still find within us the passion of concupiscence and so strong an inclination to evil?" It is true indeed that this "law of sin" (Rom. viii. 2) has been inherited by us from the authors of our race. For we all owe our existence to a sinful will and hence it happens that our own wills are corrupt and, as it were, full of ulcers. This is the explanation of those evil desires and those carnal motions which we so often experience in spite of ourselves. I have frequently reminded you, brethren, and you ought never to forget that we were all of us involved in the fall of the first man. We fell upon mud and stones so that we have been not only begrimed but also bruised and badly shaken. Now, dirt can be quickly washed away, but to heal a wound many remedies are required. So we have been already cleansed in the sacrament of baptism whereby "the hand-writing of the decree" of our condemnation has been blotted out (Col. ii. 14). Moreover, the grace of this sacrament protects us in such a manner that concupiscence can no longer do us any hurt, provided we refuse our consent to its suggestions; and thus it clears away the corrupted matter—if I may be allowed the expression—of our inveterate ulcer by removing the condemnation and "the answer of death" (2 Cor. i. 9) whereof it was the source. But who shall be able to bridle such intractable motions? Who can bear the

prurience of this sore? Have confidence, my brethren, because herein also grace is our helper; and in order to give us perfect security, we have made over to us by a solemn act the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and most precious Blood. This Sacrament produces two effects in us: it weakens the force of concupiscence in the lesser things and keeps us from consenting in more serious matters. If any of you is not now assailed so often or so violently by the passion of anger, or of envy, or of lust, or by other such domestic enemies, let him return thanks to the Body and Blood of Christ, because the power of the Sacrament has been efficacious in him, and let him rejoice that his most malignant ulcer is beginning to heal.

But what ought we to do, brethren, considering that so long as we live in this "body of sin" (Rom. vi. 6), in this wicked world, we cannot be altogether without sin? Ought we to despair? God forbid! Listen to the Evangelist, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all iniquity" (1 John i. 8, 9). And that we may have no doubt concerning the remission of our daily venial faults, the ceremony of the washing of the feet has been instituted as a special sacrament for that purpose. Perhaps you would like to hear how I can be sure that the washing of the feet is a sacrament instituted for the remission of our venial faults? Especially as the Lord Himself, after giving a promise to Peter in the words, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter" (John xiii. 7), said nothing at all about a sacrament, but only, "I have given you

an example, that as I have done to you so you do also" (ibid. 15). Nevertheless, He had many things to say to them which they could not bear then (John xvi. 12). Therefore He would not, on the one hand, leave them altogether in a state of anxious doubt and incertitude, nor did He wish, on the other hand, to reveal to them what they could not comprehend. Now do you desire me to prove that in washing the disciples' feet the Lord not only gave us an example but also instituted a sacrament? Attend to what He said to Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with Me" (John xiii. 8). From these words it is manifest that there was something necessary for salvation concealed in this ceremony, since without it not even Peter could have part in the kingdom of Christ and of God. For see how Peter trembled with affright at the awful sound of that threatening sentence, see how he acknowledged that the ceremony contained a mystery of salvation by his answer, "Lord, not only my feet but also my hands and my head" (ibid. 9). But how do we know that this sacramental ablution has been instituted to cleanse us from those sins which are not unto death (1 John v. 16) and which we cannot altogether avoid so long as we live in the flesh? It is evident from the fact that when Peter offered his hands and head as well as his feet to be washed, he received the answer, "He that is washed needeth not but to wash his feet" (John xiii. 9, 10). For "he that is washed" is he who has no mortal sin on his soul, whose head and hands, that is to say, whose intention, actions, and conversation are clean; although his feet, that is, the affections of his soul, cannot be entirely pure whilst he walks through the

dusty ways of this world. For it must needs be that his spirit shall occasionally indulge to excess—though but for a moment—in curiosity, pleasure, or vanity, as it is written, "In many things we all offend" (James iii. 2).

Nevertheless, no one ought to regard such sins as negligible or to underrate their malice. For it is impossible for the soul to enter heaven until they have been removed, and impossible to remove them otherwise than by the power and through the merits of Jesus Christ. Let no one, I say, lull himself to sleep in a dangerous security, "inclining his heart to evil words, to make excuses in sins" (Ps. xl. 4), because, as the Lord said to Peter, unless He washes such sins away, we shall not have part with Him.* However, we must not be over anxious on this account. For He will readily, aye, and gladly forgive us our daily faults on condition that we acknowledge them. Indifference and immoderate fear are equally blameworthy with regard to these faults which are in a sense inevitable. Hence it is that in the prayer which Christ composed for our use, He causes us to implore the pardon of them day by day. Speaking of concupiscence, I said that although the Redeemer has prevented it from working our ruin, according to the testimony of St. Paul, "There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1), He

* Of course, the holy Preacher does not mean to say that souls which depart this life stained with the guilt of venial sins shall never see the Face of God—if such were the case there would be no distinction between venial sin and mortal—but only that the defilement must be removed either here or hereafter, since of the kingdom of God it is written, "There shall not enter into it anything defiled" (Apoc. xxi. 27).—(Translator.)

nevertheless allows it to live in us still and to trouble us gravely in order to keep us humble, and to teach us how much we owe to divine grace, so that we may always have recourse to its assistance. It is in the same way He deals with us as regards these venial transgressions, which by a particular dispensation of His loving-kindness He does not altogether prevent, but rather makes use of them to instruct us. For He wants us to learn from the experience of our powerlessness to avoid the lighter faults that it is not by our own strength we are preserved from the graver; so that we may be always solicitous, always fearful of losing that grace which we perceive to be so necessary to us.*

* "Some are preserved from great temptations and are often overcome in daily little ones: that being humbled they may never presume of themselves in great things, who are found so weak in such small occurrences" (*Imitation of Christ*, Bk. I. ch. 13). "Our Lord treats us just in the same way as a good father, or a good mother, who lets her child walk quite alone when it is in a soft meadow where the grass is thick, or upon a mossy bank; but on bad and dangerous roads, she carries the little one carefully in her arms. We have often seen souls courageously bear great assaults without being overcome by their enemies, who have afterwards been vanquished in very trifling encounters. And why is this, except that Our Lord, seeing that they would not be much hurt in falling, has let them walk alone, which He did not do when they were among the precipices of grave temptations, whence He delivered them with His almighty hand?" (*Conferences of St. Francis of Sales*, p. 144—English Translation).

FIRST SERMON FOR EASTER SUNDAY.

On the Apocalyptic Book and its Sevenfold Seal, and on the proper Mode of celebrating Easter.

"And one of the ancients said to me: Weep not; behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof."—Apoc. v. 5.

"The Lion of the tribe of Juda hath prevailed" (Apoc. v. 5). Wisdom clearly hath prevailed over malice (Wisdom vii. 30), Wisdom that "reacheth from end to end mightily and ordereth all things sweetly" (ibid. viii. 1), acting mightily for me, sweetly with me. He, the Wisdom of God, prevailed on the cross over the blasphemies of the Jews, He bound the strong man armed (Mark iii. 27), and triumphed over the very empire of death. Where now, O Jew, are thy reproaches? Where, O Zabulon, are now the captives of thy hand? "O death, where is thy victory" now (1 Cor. xv. 55)? The slanderer has been put to confusion, the robber has been stripped of his spoil. We have here presented to us a novel kind of power.* Death hitherto victorious has been confounded. What will you do now, O ye Jews, who on the day of the crucifixion were wagging your sacrilegious heads before the cross, and heaping insults on Christ, the true Head of man, calling out to Him in mockery, "Let Christ the King of Israel come down from the cross" (Mark xv. 32)? O venomous tongues!

* "Novum genus potentiae"—from the hymn for vespers of the Feast of the Epiphany.—(Translator.)

O "evil words" (Ps. cxl. 4)! O "wicked speech" (Ecclus. xxxvii. 21)! These are not the words which thou, O Caiphas, didst utter a short time before, saying, "It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people and that the whole nation perish not" (John xi. 50). That was no lie, because it was not thine own nor didst thou say it of thyself (ibid. 51). "If He be the King of Israel let Him now come down from the cross" (Matt. xxvii. 42): these words are undoubtedly thine, or rather they belong to him who is a liar from the beginning (John viii. 44). For how does it follow from the fact of His being a King that He ought rather to descend than ascend? O thou "old serpent" (Apoc. xx. 2), hast thou thus forgotten how thou wert once obliged to withdraw in confusion after presuming to say to Him, "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down" (Matt. iv. 6), and, "All these will I give Thee, if falling down Thou wilt adore me" (ibid. 9)? And thou also, O Jew, art thou so unmindful of what thou hast heard from the Psalmist, "The Lord hath reigned on the wood" * (Ps. xcv. 9), that thou refusest to believe Him a king because He remains upon the wood? But perhaps thou hast not heard this announcement at all, since not to the Jews

* "Dicite in gentibus quia Dominus regnavit a ligno." So this verse was read by several of the Fathers, including St. Augustine. The words "a ligno" are missing now in all the versions. St. Justin Martyr (*ob.* A.D. 166) testifies that they had been expunged from the Septuagint by the Jews. The great Christian poet, Fortunatus, uses them in his magnificent hymn *Vexilla Regis*:—

"Impleta sunt quae concinit
David fideli carmine,
Dicens in nationibus
Regnavit a ligno Deus."

Cf. Bellarmin on this verse.—(Translator.)

but to the Gentiles it was to be made : " Say ye among the gentiles," sings the Prophet, " the Lord hath reigned on the wood."

Appropriately, therefore, did the gentile ruler put the title of king upon the cross of Christ. And the Jew had not even the power—although he had the wish—to change that title, to say nothing of preventing the Lord's passion and our redemption. " If He be the King of Israel, let Him come down from the cross." Nay, rather, because He is the King of Israel, let Him not abandon His title, let Him not lay aside the sceptre of His rule, for " the government is upon His shoulder," as the Prophet Isaias predicted (Is. ix. 6). " Write not," said the Jews to Pilate, " Write not : the King of the Jews, but that He said : I am the King of the Jews. Pilate answered : What I have written, I have written " (John xix. 21, 22). Now if Pontius Pilate has written what he has written, shall not Christ complete what He has begun ? Yea, as He hath begun so He will save us.* But the Jews say, " He saved others, Himself He cannot save " (Matt. xxvii. 42). Now, were He to come down from the cross, He would save none at all. For if final perseverance is necessary for him who would be saved (Matt. x. 22), much more necessary is it for Him Who would be a Saviour. " He saved others," therefore, but not Himself, for being Himself Salvation (Ps. xxxiv. 3) He has no need to be saved. He is working our " salvation in the midst of the earth " (Ps. lxxiii. 12), and He will not suffer the least part to be wanting in the saving Victim of the evening sacrifice. Well He knows what thou

* " Quia Ipse coepit et salvabit nos," evidently an echo of Osee vi. 2 : " Quia Ipse cepit et sanabit nos."—(Translator.)

art thinking of, O wicked one. He will not give thee any occasion of craftily breaking off our perseverance, which alone shall be crowned. He will not close the mouths of them who preach the Gospel, of them who console the faint-hearted and admonish each of the faithful not to quit his appointed place, which we should doubtless do were it possible for us to answer that Christ had abandoned His own place. "For the imagination and thought of man's heart are prone to evil," as the Scriptures bear witness (Gen. viii. 21). In vain, O malignant one, in vain hast thou "prepared thy arrows in the quiver" (Ps. x. 3). In vain dost thou reinforce the sorrow of the disciples with the insults of the Jews. The former are sinking into despair, the latter are multiplying their reproaches. But by neither of these species of darts can Christ be wounded. He has chosen another time for comforting His disciples and for confounding His foes.

Meanwhile He is more solicitous to commend to us by His example the virtues of patience and humility, and to give us lessons in perfect obedience and perfect charity. With these four virtues, as with so many precious stones, the four branches of His cross are adorned: charity on top, obedience on the right, patience on the left, and humility, the root of all the other virtues, beneath. With these spiritual gems, I say, the Lord decorated the trophy of His cross in the consummation of His passion. For He received with humility the blasphemous reproaches of the Jews, and showed patience in suffering when He was pierced outwardly with nails and inwardly with the tongues of maligners; His charity was proved perfect in that He laid down His life for His friends, and His obedi-

ence when "bowing His head, He gave up the ghost" (John xix. 30), "becoming obedient unto death" (Phil. ii. 8). Such, my brethren, is the dowry, and such the glory of Christ whereof they wished to rob the Church, who exclaimed, "If He be the King of Israel, let Him come down from the cross." They designed, namely, that we should have no pattern of obedience, that we should have no model of humility and patience, no motive of love, but that these most tender words should be blotted from the Gospel, these words "sweeter than honey and the honey-comb" (Ps. xviii. 11): "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John xv. 13), and these to the Father. "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (ibid. xvii. 4), and these to the disciples, "Learn of Me because I am meek and humble of heart" (Matt. xi. 29), and these others to the multitude, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all things to Myself" (John xii. 32). For what most particularly grieves the cunning and venomous old serpent is to see lifted up in the desert the brazen serpent, the contemplation of which heals the wounds inflicted by its malice (Num. xxi. 8). At whose instigation if not at the serpent's * shall we suppose Pilate's wife "sent to him, saying: Have thou nothing to do with that just Man. For I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him" (Matt. xxvii. 19)? Therefore the devil was even then alarmed. But it was after the crucifixion

* This is also the opinion of St. Cyprian, Denis the Carthusian, and Cardinal Cajetan. But according to the more common view the author of the dream which alarmed the governor's wife was not the devil but a holy angel. Cf. A Lapide.—(Translator.)

especially that he realised how much his power was weakened by the virtue of the cross, and he repented too late of his action. Those whom he had previously spurred on to crucify Christ, he now urges to induce Him to descend from the cross. "If He be the King of the Jews," they cried, "let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him." This is undoubtedly the serpent's craft, this is a stratagem of the "spirit of wickedness" (Ephes. vi. 12). The impious one had heard the Saviour saying, "I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel" (Matt. xv. 24), and he knew what zeal He had shown for the salvation of the Jewish people. Wherefore, instructing the tongues of the blasphemers with malice exceeding great, he inspired them to say, "Let Him now come down from the cross and we will believe Him." For he supposed that after this promise there was nothing more to prevent Christ from descending since what He had most at heart was the conversion of the Jews.

But what is the guileful serpent scheming for and against whom is he plotting? He is plotting against Him over Whom "the enemy shall have no advantage, nor the son of iniquity have power to hurt Him" (Ps. lxxxviii. 23). *He* cannot be deceived by an empty promise Who knows the hearts of all His creatures, any more than He Who is the meekest of men can be moved to anger by blasphemous insults. As for Satan's design in urging Him to descend, it was not in order that the Jews might believe in Him, but rather to ruin our faith in Him (supposing we should have any) by every means possible. For having read that "the works of God are perfect" (Deut. xxxii. 4) how could we acknowledge

Him to be God Who left incomplete the work of our redemption? But let us hear what answer Christ Himself makes through His Prophet to this invitation: "Seekest thou a sign, O Jew? 'Expect Me in the day of My resurrection that is to come'" (Soph. iii. 8). "If thou hast the good will to believe in Me," He seems to say, "I have already offered thee signs enough, signs more wonderful than that which thou art now soliciting. I multiplied prodigies, and I wrought miraculous cures yesterday and the day before. But to-day it is necessary that I be consummated (Luke xiii. 32). Are not the things thou hast witnessed—the evil spirits going out of the bodies of the possessed and the paralytics springing up from their beds—are not these greater marvels than would be the withdrawal from My Hands and Feet of the nails which thou hast hammered in? At all events, this is not 'the time for doing' (Ps. cxviii. 126) but the time for suffering. And as thou strovest in vain to anticipate the hour of My passion (John vii. 30), so dost thou fruitlessly strive now to prevent its accomplishment."

But if this "evil and adulterous generation still seeketh a sign, a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas the Prophet" (Matt. xii. 39): that is to say, not the sign of a descent from the cross, but the sign of a resurrection from the tomb. And if the Jew does not seek this sign, let the Christian at least embrace it and rejoice in it. For "the Lion of the tribe of Juda hath prevailed." The "Lion's Whelp" hath been aroused by the voice of the Father (Gen. xlix. 9): He Who refused to come down from the cross has issued forth from the closed sepulchre. As to whether the latter is not a greater miracle than

the former would have been, we may leave it to our enemies to decide, to them who were so solicitous to "make the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting guards" (Matt. xxvii. 66). Of this great stone, concerning which the holy women "said to one another: Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" (Mark xvi. 3), we read how, after the Lord's resurrection, "an angel rolled it back and sat upon it" (Matt. xxviii. 3). It is plain from this that Christ's reanimated Body passed out from the closed tomb as It had originally issued forth to life at His birth from the inviolate womb of His Mother; and as It was later on to enter the room where "the disciples were gathered together, the doors being shut" (John xx. 19). There was one place, however, whence he was unwilling to emerge leaving the doors shut, I mean the prison-house of limbo. For there "He hath broken the gates of brass and burst the iron bars" (Ps. cvi. 16) and destroyed all the fastenings in order to lead out His own freely whom "He redeemed from the hand of the enemy" (Ps. cv. 10), in order that through wide-open portals might issue forth the multitude of the purified, who "have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb" (Apoc. vii. 14). Mark how the Evangelist says, "made them white in the Blood of the Lamb," because, namely, together with that Blood there also issued forth whitening water: "he that saweth giveth testimony" (John xix. 35). Or perhaps it is meant that the robes were indeed made white in blood, but in the milk-like Blood, white and ruddy, of a young Lamb, agreeably to what is written in the Canticle of Canticles, "My Beloved is white and ruddy, chosen

out of thousands" (Cant. v. 10). Therefore it was that the angel who announced His resurrection showed himself also in white garments, "and his countenance was as lightning" (Matt. xxviii. 3).

But if for the purpose of repelling the slanders of the Jews this one fact appears to suffice, that the Lord passed out from the closed sepulchre, He to Whom they said in mockery, "If He be the King of Israel, let Him come down from the cross"—for they took more pains to close and seal the tomb (Matt. xxvii. 64-66) than they did to drive home the nails—if, I say, "the Lion of the tribe of Juda hath prevailed" by this miraculous passage through the rock and offered His enemies a greater wonder than they demanded: to what can we compare the miracle of the resurrection itself? We read, it is true, of some other resurrections, or rather of certain resuscitations which preceded the resurrection of Christ; but they were only figures of the latter, which, as you know, excelled them all in two important respects. In the first place, the other individuals who were restored to life were destined to die again; whereas "Christ, rising again from the dead, dieth now no more: death shall no more have dominion over Him. For in that He died to sin, He dieth once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God" (Rom. vi. 9, 10), He liveth unto eternity. Justly, therefore, is Christ called the "first-fruits" of them that rise from the dead (1 Cor. xv. 20), because He arose in such a manner that He can fall no more, Who alone hath attained to immortality (1 Tim. vi. 16).

To come now to the second point in which the resurrection of the Lord shines with an incomparable

glory. Amongst all the others who came back from the dead, is there a single one that revived himself? It is a thing hitherto unheard of: that of his own power a man hath aroused himself from the sleep of death. It is a prodigy unprecedented: "there is none that hath done (the like), no, not one" (Ps. lii. 4). The Prophet Eliseus raised to life one who was dead, but it was another, not himself (4 Kings iv. 35). And behold how many years he has been lying in the tomb, hoping for a resurrection, not however from himself, because he has not the power, but from Him Who hath triumphed over the empire of death in His own Body. This is the reason why we say of all others who returned to life that they *were resuscitated*, whereas we speak of Christ as having *arisen*, Who of His own power vanquished death and issued forth from the sepulchre: for herein also, "the Lion of the tribe of Juda hath prevailed." But if He had such power when "counted among them that go down to the pit" although "free among the dead" (Ps. lxxxvii. 5), what power shall He possess, or rather what power shall He appear not to possess when revived and saying to the Father, "I have arisen and am still with Thee" (Ps. cxxxviii. 18)?

He willed that His resurrection should not be postponed beyond the third day in order "that His Prophet might be found faithful" (Ecclus. xxxvi. 18), who had said, "He will revive us after two days, on the third day He will raise us up" (Osee vi. 3). For it is becoming that the resurrection of the members should follow the precedent given them by their Head. He redeemed man on the cross on the sixth day, the same day on which He created

man at the beginning. On the following day He rested in the sepulchre, having completed the work which He had undertaken to do. But on the third day, which is the first of all days, He appeared as "the first-fruits of them that sleep" (1 Cor. xv. 20), the Conqueror of death, the New Man. So we also during the whole of this day in which we are created and redeemed should not cease to do penance, should not cease to carry our cross and to persevere on it, as Christ persevered, until the Spirit shall tell us to rest from our labours (Apoc. xiv. 13). My brethren, let us listen to no one who counsels us to descend from the cross, whether it be flesh and blood or an intangible spirit. Let us remain upon the cross and let us expire upon the cross. Let us be taken down from the cross by the hands of others, rather than by our own inconsistency. Our Divine Head was taken down by holy men. But the holy angels will condescend to take us down. Then, having courageously consummated the day on the cross, during the second day, which commences after death, we shall rest sweetly and sleep tranquilly in the tomb, "looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God" (Titus ii. 13), Who, on the third day will raise up "the body of our lowness made like to the Body of His glory" (Phil. iii. 21). The bodies that remain in the sepulchre until the fourth day are in a state of corruption, according to what was said of Lazarus, "Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he is now of four days" (John xi. 39).

This fourth day, my brethren, was not given us by the Lord, but was designed and formed by the children of Adam. Wherefore "they are corrupt and are

become abominable in their ways" (Ps. xiii. 1), as "beasts that have rotted in their dung" (Joel i. 17). There are only three days of divine ordinance, those which I have mentioned: the day of labour, the day of rest, and the day of resurrection. The children of men are not satisfied with these; they want to give the preference to a day of their own devising, putting off the time of penance in order to indulge in their pleasures. This assuredly is not a "day which the Lord hath made" (Ps. cxvii. 24): they have become corrupt, "for they are now of four days." The Holy One Who was born of Mary knew nothing of this fourth day of man's making; for He arose on the third day that He might not see corruption (Ps. xv. 10).

So "the Lion of the tribe of Juda hath prevailed." The Lamb was slain, but the Lion hath conquered. "The Lion shall roar, who will not fear?" (Amos iii. 8). The Lion, I say, shall roar, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the mightiest of all animals, Who dreads the approach of no enemy. Let them be afraid who denied Him, who exclaimed, "We have no king but Cæsar" (John xix. 15). Let them be frightened who said, "We will not have this Man to reign over us" (Luke xix. 14). For He will "return, having received the kingdom" (Luke xix. 15) and "He will bring those evil men to an evil end" (Matt. xxi. 41). Do you want proof that He will return, having received the kingdom? Listen to His own words: "All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18). Hear also what the Father says to Him in the psalm: "Ask of Me and I will give Thee the gentiles for Thy inheritance and the utmost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt rule them with a rod of

iron and shalt break them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Ps. ii. 8, 9). Strong in truth is our Lion, yet not cruel. Nevertheless, His anger is terrible: insupportable is the "wrath of the Dove" (Jer. xxv. 38). But remember that the Lion will roar, not against His friends, but in their behalf. Others have good cause to fear, but let the tribe of Juda exult.

Let them rejoice, I say, who have "put on confession" * (Ps. ciii. 1), "all whose bones exclaim: Lord, who is like to Thee?" (Ps. xxxiv. 10). "Behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed" (Apoc. v. 5). Now David is said to have been a man of desirable appearance and very strong (1 Kings xvi. 18); and he himself confesses, "Lord, all my desire is before Thee" (Ps. xxxvii. 10) also, "I will keep my strength to Thee" (Ps. lviii. 10). Christ is called by the Evangelist "the Root of David." David is not His root, but He is David's, because He is the One Who supports, not the one supported. Rightly, O holy David, dost thou call thy Son thy Lord (Ps. cix. 1), since "thou bearest not the Root, but the Root thee" (Rom. xi. 18). The Root of thy strength and of thy desire is a strong Root and a desirable Root. "Behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof" (Apoc. v. 5). These words are taken from the Apocalypse. Attend to them you that have not heard them before, and do you that have known them remember them. "And I saw," says St. John, "in the right hand of Him That sat on the throne, a book written within and

* Cf. vol. i. p. 374, note.

without, sealed with seven seals. . . . And no man was able . . . to open the book nor to look upon it. And I wept much because no man was found worthy to open the book. And one of the ancients said to me : Weep not ; behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I saw : and behold in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the ancients, a Lamb standing as it were slain. . . . And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him That sat on the throne, and when He had opened the book " there was great rejoicing and thanksgiving in heaven (Apoc. v. 1-8). John heard the Lion and he saw the Lamb. The Lamb was slain, the Lamb took the book, the Lamb opened the book, and then appeared as a Lion. For, as the ancients sang, " The Lamb That was slain is worthy to receive strength " (ibid. 12). He does not lose His meekness, but acquires strength, so that He becomes a Lion without ceasing to be a Lamb. I will say something still more strange : in my opinion the Lamb is not only the Lion, but is also the Book That could not be opened. Where indeed could one be found worthy to open this Book ? Even John the Baptist himself, than whom " there hath not risen among them that are born of women a greater " (Matt. xi. 11), even he acknowledges his unworthiness for such an office, saying, " The latchet of His shoe I am not worthy to loose " (John i. 27). For through the incarnation of the Word, the Divine Majesty came to us shod (so to speak) with the shoe of our humanity ; the Wisdom of God came to us, but in a book that was closed and sealed. That which was bound by the

latchet of the shoe, the same was secured by the seals of the book.

But how am I to interpret this sevenfold seal? Shall I take the seven seals to signify the three faculties of the soul, viz., memory, will, and understanding, together with the four elements of which the body is constituted, so that we may know that nothing of the reality of human nature is wanting to the Saviour? Or had I better suppose the book itself to be the sacred Humanity, and endeavour to find the seven seals thereof? In fact, it appears to me that I can discover seven circumstances which in a special manner concealed the presence of the Divine Majesty in the flesh, preventing the book from being opened by any one and the Wisdom hidden within it from becoming known. The circumstances or seals which occur to me at the moment are these: first, the Mother's espousals, which veiled Christ's virginal birth and the purity of His conception, so that the Creator of men was considered the Son of a carpenter; second, the weakness of His Body, by reason whereof He used to weep and wail like an ordinary child of Adam, to feed and sleep, and to experience all the other necessities of the flesh, which served as a mask for the divine power dwelling in Him; third, His submitting Himself to the rite of circumcision, the remedy for sin and for the diseases of the soul—He Who came to take away all sin and all our moral distempers; fourth, His flight into Egypt from the face of King Herod, which made it impossible to recognise in Him the Son of God or the King of heaven; fifth, the threefold temptation to which He was subjected by the enemy, in the desert, on the pinnacle of the temple, and on

the mountain: "If Thou be the Son of God," said the demon, "command that these stones be made bread" (Matt. iv. 3), and, "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down" (ibid. 6). But Christ did neither the one nor the other in order that the book might be more securely sealed and the truth kept from the knowledge of Satan. So greatly in fact was the latter deceived that he now held it as certain that Christ was nothing more than a mere man, and blinded by pride he became so utterly infatuated that he no longer said, "If Thou be the Son of God," but, "All these will I give Thee if falling down Thou wilt adore me" (ibid. 9). The sixth seal is the seal of the cross upon which the Lord of Majesty hung between two robbers "and was reputed with the wicked" (Is. liii. 12). The sepulchre finally sealed this book; and no other seal bound it so firmly or so thoroughly concealed "the mystery of godliness" (1 Tim. iii. 16). For after the Lord had been laid in the tomb, nothing seemed to remain but despair, so that the disciples themselves lost hope, since they said, "We *hoped* that it was He That should have redeemed Israel" (Luke xxiv. 21). Who would not have wept at that time when the book was so tightly closed and sealed and there was none to open it?

But weep no more, O blessed John; and do thou also, holy Magdalen, dry thy tears. Let grief withdraw afar and the clouds of sorrow be scattered. "Be glad in the Lord and rejoice ye just, and glory, all ye right of heart" (Ps. xxxi. 11). For "the Lamb That was slain is worthy" (Apoc. v. 12), and the Lion That has arisen, to open the Book: yea, the Book also is worthy to open Itself. By rising from the dead, and rising

by His own power, and after three days, as He had foretold according to the testimony of His very enemies (Matt. xxvii. 63), and by rising in such majesty and glory, He plainly indicated that all the seals or masks of which I have spoken were voluntarily assumed, not unavoidably submitted to, and belonged to Him not by necessity of His condition but by the choice of His condescension. Wherefore, O ye Jews, did you so lately seal the sepulchre? Because "that Seducer said, while He was yet alive: after three days I will rise again" (ibid.). Yea, a Seducer He is, indeed, but in a good, not in a bad sense of the word. "Thou hast deceived me, O God, and I am deceived," cried one of your prophets, speaking in your person, "Thou hast been stronger than I and Thou hast prevailed" (Jer. xx. 7). He hath deceived you, O ye Jews, in His passion; and in His resurrection He hath overcome and prevailed, the conquering Lion of the tribe of Juda. For hear what the Apostle says, "if they had known, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. ii. 8). What, therefore, will you do? He foretold that He would arise and He has arisen. Examine carefully the seal of His sepulchre: you shall find it loosed. You have been offered the sign of Jonas the Prophet, as He also predicted (Matt. xii. 39). As Jonas emerged from the stomach of the whale after three days, so did Christ issue forth on the third day from the heart of the earth (ibid. 40). But manifestly "a greater than Jonas is here" (ibid. 41), since the Saviour delivered Himself mightily from the very womb of death. Therefore "the men of Ninive shall rise in judgment" (ibid. 41) against you; therefore, they shall be your judges, because they gave heed

to a prophet, whilst you refuse to obey even the Lord of the prophets.

Where now is that promise of yours, given in the words, "Let Him now come down from the cross and we will believe Him" (Matt. xxvii. 42)? You wanted Him to break the seal of the cross, promising that, if He did so, you would accept the faith and enter His fold. Behold that seal is now, not broken indeed, but loosed. Will you not enter? But if you will not believe in Him after His resurrection from the dead, neither would you have believed in Him, had He come down from the cross. If the cross of Christ has been a scandal to you, as the Apostle bears witness, saying, "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block" (1 Cor. i. 23), at least let the novel glory of the resurrection attract you. As for us, we find our glory even in the cross (Gal. vi. 14). "To them that are saved, that is, to us, it (the cross) is the power of God" (1 Cor. i. 18), and the fulness, as I have shown, of all virtues. But do you have part with us at least in the resurrection. Perhaps, however, the resurrection also will prove a scandal to you, yea, and a greater scandal than the cross? Perhaps what to us is "the odour of life unto life" will be to you "the odour of death unto death" (2 Cor. ii. 16). Wherefore, then, should I insist further? Our elder brother cannot endure to hear the music and the dancing; he is angry because the fatted calf has been killed for our entertainment; he remains outside and absolutely refuses to enter (Luke xv. 25-28). But let us enter, dearest brethren, and "let us feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. v. 8), "for Christ, our Pasch, is sacrificed" (ibid. 7). Let us embrace

the virtues commended to us in the cross of the Lord: humility, patience, obedience, charity.

We should likewise ponder in diligent thought what is that which is especially commended to us by this glorious solemnity of Easter. As for myself, I take it to be three things: a resurrection, a passage, and a transmigration. For Christ, dearest brethren, has not fallen back to-day, but has arisen; He has not returned, but passed on; He has transmigrated, not retraced His steps. The very word Pasch, the name of the feast we are celebrating, signifies, not a going back, but a passing over; and the name of Galilee, where it is promised us that we shall see Him Who has arisen, means a transmigration, not a return. I suppose the minds of some of you are now running ahead of me and have divined the drift of my remarks. But even so, I will speak my thoughts: yet in few words, lest, amongst other reasons, the prolixity of the sermon should weary your devotion on so great a solemnity as to-day's. If, then, after the consummation of the cross, our Lord Jesus Christ had arisen again to this our mortal existence and to the miseries of this present life, I should have said He had returned, not that He had passed over: that He had gone back to His former condition, not transmigrated to a state more sublime. Now, however, having Himself passed on to a newness of life, He invites us also to make the same passage, He summons us to Galilee. For therefore "in that He died to sin, He dieth once," because "in that He liveth now, He liveth—not unto flesh but—unto God" (Rom. vi. 10).

What shall we say of ourselves, my brethren, who empty the holy resurrection of the Lord of the title

of pasch, proper to it, by making this solemnity rather an occasion of returning for our souls than of passing on? The days of Lent we passed in mourning, devoting ourselves to compunction, prayer, recollection, and abstinence, anxious to make amends and satisfaction during that sacred quadragesimal season for the sins and negligences of other times. We have communicated in the sufferings of Christ, having been again "planted together with Him in the likeness of His death" (Rom. vi. 5), by a second baptism, as it were, of tears, penance, and confession. If therefore we have truly "died to sin," how can it happen that we shall ever again live in sin? If we have sincerely lamented our shortcomings, how is it that we so soon fall back into them once more? By and by we shall again be found as much given to curiosity as we were before, as talkative as we were before, as slothful and negligent as we were before; we shall be found as much infected as ever with the vices of vanity, suspicion, detraction, irascibility, and all the other spiritual maladies, which we lamented so bitterly during the days just elapsed. "I have put off my garment, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?" (Cant. v. 3). This, my brethren, is not a transmigration. Not so shall Christ be seen. This is not the way in which God has promised to show us His Salvation (Ps. xl. 23). For "no man putting his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke ix. 62).

It is thus the lovers of this world, "enemies of the cross of Christ" (Phil. iii. 18), Whose name they take in vain by calling themselves Christians: it is thus they long during the whole time of Lent for the coming of

the present paschal season, in order, alas! that they may indulge more freely their appetite for pleasure. So sorrowful a reflection, dearest brethren, overcasts with a cloud of gloom the joy of to-day's solemnity. But it is the dishonour done to the solemnity that makes me weep, a dishonour which I cannot shut my eyes to, no, not even on the day of the solemnity itself, nay rather much less on this day. Oh, the shame of it! That the day of Christ's resurrection should be made a time for sinning, an occasion for relapsing! From this day the "rioting and drunkenness" shall return, the "chamberings and impurities" shall reappear (Rom. xiii. 13), and a free rein shall be given to passion: as if, forsooth, it is for such things Christ arose from the dead and not rather "for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25). O miserable men, is it thus you honour Christ now that you have received Him? You made ready a lodging for Him in your hearts before He had yet arrived, confessing your sins with tears, chastising your bodies, distributing alms to the poor: and behold, no sooner has He become your Guest than you deliver Him up to His enemies, yea, oblige Him to withdraw from your souls by readmitting your former vices! For light can have no "fellowship with darkness" (2 Cor. vi. 14), neither can Christ dwell in the same heart with arrogance, with cupidity, with ambition, with uncharitable feelings, with luxury and the vices of the flesh. How can it be that less honour is due to Him when arrived than when approaching? Why should not the time of His resurrection demand from us as much reverence as the time of His passion? But you make it manifest that you have no respect for either the passion or the resurrection. For if you

really suffered with Him you would also reign with Him (2 Tim. ii. 12); if you really died together with Him, you would rise to a new life together with Him.

Now the humility practised by you worldlings during the time of Lent is proved to have been only conventional and simulated by the fact that it is not followed by a spiritual exaltation (Matt. xxiii. 12). "Therefore," as the Apostle says, "there are many infirm and weak among you, and many sleep" (1 Cor. xi. 30).* Therefore death is wont to be particularly busy during these days in various countries.

* It is the common interpretation of these words and indeed the only one the context seems to admit, that unworthy Communions are sometimes punished by God with sickness and death. Several of the Fathers have remarked the frequency of sudden deaths during Easter-tide, which they attribute to sacrilegious Communions. "Thus even in our own day," writes St. Anselm, "many are carried off suddenly (*corripiuntur*) after Easter because they unworthily received the Body of the Lord" (cf. A Lapide). "The Holy Ghost bade St. Paul reveal to the Church that, because of sacrilegious Communions, many of the faithful are visited with sickness and some even with death. . . . Durandus tells us that for many years, in Rome, there were so many sudden deaths about Easter that the public attention was drawn to it, especially as there seemed no reason in the ordinary course why the average should be so greatly exceeded always at the occurrence of that moveable feast. At length the Pope received some light, by which he was led to infer that this annual visitation of sudden deaths was in consequence of the number of sacrilegious Communions made by those who were fulfilling the Easter precept. In consequence of this he added the following verse to the Paschal Hymn:

Quaesumus auctor omnium
In hoc paschali gaudio
Ab omni mortis impetu
Tuum defende populum;

which, since the correction (?) of the hymns in the Roman Breviary has stood thus:

Ut sis perenne mentibus
Paschale, Jesu, gaudium,
A morte dira criminum
Vitae renatos libera."

Faber, *Blessed Sacrament*, p. 555.—(Translator.)

What, then, are you to do? O ye prevaricators, you have been "taken in the midst of straits" (Jer. Lament. 1. 3), not because you have transgressed, but because you have continued obstinate in sin and added prevarication thereto, either wholly impenitent or coldly contrite, refusing, even after lamentable experience, to avoid the occasions of sin. The enemy has entangled you with a net of "sinews wrapped together" as the Scripture says (Job. xl. 12). Now if you refuse to participate in the Sacrament of Christ because of this evil state of your conscience, you shall have nothing in common with Him, and "you shall not have life in you" (John vi. 54). For this is what He has said Himself, "Except you eat of the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you." On the other hand, if you approach the altar unworthily, "you eat judgment to yourselves, not discerning the body of the Lord" (1 Cor. xi. 29). Therefore, "return, ye transgressors to the heart" (Is. xlvi. 8). Seek ye the Lord with your whole heart (Deut. iv. 29) and "hate evil" (Ps. xcvi. 10), proving yourselves to be penitent "not in word and in tongue only but in deed and in truth" (1 John iii. 18). But inasmuch as he does not seem sincerely sorry for having fallen who is resolved to remain still upon the ice, nor he for having strayed who refuses to seek for a guide: let the abandonment of opportunities and the avoidance of the occasions of sin prove the reality of your repentance. Otherwise it is greatly to be feared that this day, which "is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many" (Luke ii. 34) shall be a day of reprobation for you, either as openly alien from Christ Whom you

refuse to receive in the Holy Communion, or as the associates of Judas Iscariot, into whom "Satan entered after the morsel" (John xiii. 27).

But, my brethren, "what have I to do to judge them that are without?" (1 Cor. v. 12). The only reason for referring to them at all is in order that we may grieve for having been once ourselves caught in the same snare, and that we may rejoice at having been delivered by the pure mercy of God from the same snare in which, with sorrow springing from brotherly love, we behold them still entangled. Yet would to God that even we ourselves were now found to be altogether purified and estranged from the wretched and sacrilegious custom I have been condemning, and that the advent of Easter did not cause us to diminish or relax anything of our spiritual fervour, but rather encouraged us to advance and increase! For whosoever does not return to the consolations of the flesh after the lamentations of penance, but passes out of himself into an assured hope in the divine mercy, and enters upon a new life of devotion and "joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. xiv. 17), and is more ravished with the thought and more inflamed with the desire of his heavenly crown than disquieted by the memory of his past transgressions: such a soul has indeed arisen with Christ, and is celebrating the pasch, and is hastening forward to Galilee. "Therefore," dearest brethren, "if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth" (Col. iii. 1, 2); "that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so you also may walk in newness of life" (Rom. vi. 4), and may

have the joy of passing over from earthly delights and consolations through compunction and "the sorrow that is according to God" (2 Cor. vii. 10) into holy fervour and spiritual exultation, by the grace of Him Who hath "passed out of this world to the Father" (John xiii. 1), and Who now deigns to draw us after Him and to invite us to Galilee, where He will show Himself to us (Mark xvi. 7), He Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

SECOND SERMON FOR EASTER SUNDAY.

(Preached before the assembled Abbots.)

On the Spices wherewith the Spiritually Dead should be Embalmed.

"*And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalen, and Mary the Mother of James and Salome, bought sweet spices, that coming they might anoint Jesus.*"—Mark xvi. 1.

Brethren, we have been told by the Apostle that Christ dwelleth by faith in our hearts (Ephes. iii. 17). From this, as I judge, we may fairly conclude that as long as our faith is living, so long too does Christ live within us, and, on the contrary, that Christ in a manner dies in our souls simultaneously with the death of faith. Now good works are the evidence that our faith is alive, according to what is written, "The works which the Father hath given Me to perfect: the works themselves which I do give testimony of Me" (John v. 36), and likewise, according to the words of St. James, where he tells us that "faith without good works is dead" (James ii. 20). For just as a body is known to be alive from the movements we observe in it, in the same way we recognise faith to be living from the good works which proceed from it. Furthermore, as the life of the body is the soul from which it has its motion and sensibility, so is charity the life of faith, which exercises its activity through love, as you may read in St. Paul, "Faith which worketh by charity" (Gal. v. 6). Hence it is that faith dies when charity

loses its fervour, like the body at the departure of the soul. Whenever, consequently, you see a man strenuous in the performance of good works, and exhibiting in all his conduct a joyous and fervent devotion, have no doubt that faith is living in him, for it is proved to be alive by the most indubitable evidence. But there are some, alas! who "whereas they began in the spirit are now ending with the flesh" (Gal. iii. 3). We know, however, that the Spirit of life will not continue to dwell in such, since it is written, "My Spirit shall not remain in man for ever, because he is flesh" (Gen. vi. 3). Now if the Spirit does not remain, there can be no doubt that charity also will be lost, for charity is "poured forth in our hearts by the (same) Holy Spirit Who is given to us" (Rom. v. 5).

Moreover, as I have already remarked, the Apostle insinuates that charity is the life of faith when he says that "faith worketh by charity." Hence we may gather that the Spirit's withdrawal is the death of faith, because "it is the Spirit that quickeneth" (John vi. 64). Finally, if it be true that "the wisdom of the flesh is death" (Rom. viii. 6) there can be no doubt that they in whom heretofore we rejoiced to behold evidence of life, whilst "by the spirit they mortified the deeds of the flesh" (ibid. 13), ought now to be lamented as dead, since they have begun to "live according to the flesh" (ibid.). This is only what you may find in St. Paul: "If you live according to the flesh, you shall die. But if by the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live" (ibid.). Woe to thee, whosoever thou art, that imitatest the dog returning to the vomit, and the washed sow wallowing again in the mire! (2 Peter ii. 22).

I speak not only to those who have gone back even bodily to Egypt, but also to such as have returned thither in heart, pursuing the pleasures of this world, and losing in consequence the life of their faith, which is charity. For "if any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him" (1 John ii. 15). Who indeed can be more dead than he who nourishes a fire in his bosom, a sin in his soul, and neither feels the pain of it, nor fears the danger of it, nor makes any attempt to cast it off?

Behold, then, Christ in the sepulchre, faith dead in the soul. What is to be done in these circumstances? How did those holy women act, who alone amongst all Christ's followers seem to have been possessed with an ardent love of Him? They "bought sweet spices, that coming they might anoint Jesus." Surely it was not with any hope of restoring Him to life. Thus we know, brethren, that it is not in our power to resuscitate the spiritually dead: all we are expected to do is to embalm the corpse. And wherefore do we this? So that the soul which has died may not suffer corruption, may not become to others "an odour of death unto death" (2 Cor. ii. 16), may not be utterly dissolved and vaporised. Consequently let the three women, that is to say, the mind, the tongue, and the hand, purchase their spices. For, as it seems to me, it was with respect to these three members that Peter was given the threefold command to feed the flock of the Lord: as if Christ had said to him: "Feed My flock with thy mind, feed it with thy mouth, feed it with thy works; feed it with the prayer of thy soul, with the exhortation of thy lips, with the example of thy good works" (John xxi. 17).

Let the mind, accordingly, procure its own spices, and before all else, let it provide itself with the affection of compassion; then, with zeal for righteousness; and let not the spirit of discretion be omitted from the list. For whenever thou seest a brother transgressing, the first feeling in thy mind should be an emotion of compassion, because this is the most indigenous to thy human nature, being in fact something produced from thyself.* "Brethren," says the Apostle, "if a man be overtaken in any fault, you, who are spiritual, instruct such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. vi. 1). And when the Lord Jesus, "bearing His own cross, went forth" (John xix. 17) to be crucified, and when, not as yet "all the tribes of the earth" (Matt. xxiv. 30), but only a few Jewish women "mourned," "turningto them He said: Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children" (Luke xxiii. 28). Observe carefully the order He recommends: first "weep for yourselves," then, "weep for your children." Look well to thyself, brother, in the first place, so that thou mayest know how to compassionate thy neighbour and how to rebuke him "in the spirit of meekness." "Consider thyself, lest thou also be tempted." But inasmuch as example is a more powerful persuasive than speech and makes a stronger impression, I will refer to that holy old man, who, when he heard that one of his brethren had fallen into sin, began to weep most bitterly, exclaiming, "To-day for him, to-morrow for me." Thinkest thou that he who thus wept for him-

* Cf. *Sermons on the Canticle of Canticles*, vol. ii. pp. 4-6 (Mt. Melleray Translation).—(Translator.)

self had no pity for his brother? Besides, this sentiment of compassion is profitable to many, because persons of noble mind will feel ashamed to sadden one whom they perceive to be anxiously concerned for their welfare.

But, my brethren, how are we to deal with the stiff-necked, and the brazen-browed who, so far from being softened by our patience and compassion, only abuse them the more, the more of them they experience? Is it not right that, as we have hitherto pitied our unhappy brother, so we should now feel compassion for justice itself, which we behold so impudently outraged and so recklessly provoked? I am quite certain that, if we have any love for God in our hearts, we cannot patiently endure to see Him thus despised. Now this impatience with evil is what I call zeal for righteousness, a virtue which causes us to burn with indignation against obstinate sinners, as if we were influenced by a feeling of compassion for the justice of God, cruelly insulted before our eyes. It is necessary, nevertheless, that the affection of pity should be allowed the precedence, for otherwise "with the vehement wind (of righteous zeal we shall) break in pieces the ships of Tharsis" (Ps. xlvii. 8), we shall "break the bruised reed" (Is. xlii. 3), we shall "quench the smoking flax" (ibid.).

But when we have procured both these spices, namely, the sentiment of compassion and zeal for justice, it will be necessary to add to them a third spice, to wit, the spirit of discretion, lest perhaps when a manifestation of pity is called for, zeal should display itself, and imprudence turn everything upside down. Consequently, our minds ought to procure for themselves

as a third spice the spirit of discretion, so that, aptly suiting themselves to the occasion, they may know how to exercise zeal at the proper time and also how at the proper time to show compassion. They should in fact resemble the Good Samaritan in carefully observing the right season for administering the oil of mercy and the wine of wrath (Luke x. 33, 34). And lest you should reckon these spices to be a fancy of my own, listen to the Prophet in one of the psalms praying for the same spices in the same order: "Teach me goodness," he cries, "and discipline, and knowledge" (Ps. cxviii. 66).

But, my brethren, where shall we look for these precious spices? For the earth of our own hearts produces no such plants of virtue, only "thorns and thistles" does it bring forth to us (Gen. iii. 18). We have therefore to buy them. But from whom are they to be bought? From Him, doubtless, Who has said, "Come ye, buy wine and milk without money and without any price" (Is. lv. 1). You do not need to be told what the sweetness of the milk signifies, and what the pungency of the wine.* But how are we to understand the words, "Buy without money and without any price"? This certainly is not the mode of buying prevailing amongst the lovers of this world; yet it is the only mode possible with regard to the world's Creator. Hence the Psalmist says to the Lord, "Thou art my God, for Thou hast no need of my goods" (Ps. xv. 2). What price, therefore, shall man give for His grace Who has need of nothing and is the Owner of all? His grace, then, is given gratuitously: even when it is bought, it is bought for nothing, because

* Cf. Sermon XLIV. on the Canticle of Canticles.

the price which we pay for it, so far from being lost to us, is only made the more securely our own.

Accordingly, the price we have to pay for these three spices of the mind is nothing other than our own self-will. Yet we lose nothing by paying such a price: on the contrary, we gain a great deal, because our wills are not destroyed but only changed for the better, becoming less self-regarding and more altruistic. Now, an altruistic will is a will dominated by charity. In this way, then, we buy our sweet spices without money, since we acquire what we have not, and retain more securely what we already possess. But as for the man who does not renounce his own will, how can *he* compassionate his brother, since he only knows how to feel for himself? Or how can *he* love justice and hate iniquity (Ps. xliv. 8) whom the love of self entirely possesses? Such a one may indeed so deceive the eyes of men, yea, and may so deceive himself, that whereas he is influenced solely by self-love or private enmity, he is judged even by his own conscience to be exercising zeal or compassion. However it is not difficult to perceive how far removed from self-will are the things that appertain to genuine charity, or rather how these two are diametrically opposed. For "charity is kind, seeketh not her own, rejoiceth not in iniquity" (1 Cor. xiii. 4-6). With regard to the spirit of discretion, it is clear enough that there can be nothing more incompatible with it than self-will, which corrupts the hearts of men and blinds the eyes of reason. Accordingly, as I said before, we must purchase the three spices of the mind, namely, the sentiment of compassion, zeal for justice, and the spirit of discretion, by giving up in exchange for them our own self-will.

For the tongue also there are three spices: moderation in reproof, fluency in exhortation, efficacy in persuasion. Dost thou wish, my brother, to possess these spices? Buy them of the Lord thy God. Buy them, I say, like the others, "without money and without any price": thou hast nothing to expend in order to acquire them. Buy, therefore, of the Lord the spice of moderation in reproof, because it is unquestionably a great good and a magnificent gift and a grace not bestowed upon many. "The tongue," says St. James, "no man can tame" (James iii. 8). Thou mayest hear many a man, although possessed of a kind heart and actuated by a pure intention, lightly giving utterance to what deeply wounds.

"The spoken word we can't unsay,
Beyond recall it wings its way." *

And that which ought to have healed the spiritual ulcer, rather makes it smart and fester the more, as being perhaps too mordant. For impudence is now added to indifference and the evil is crowned by impatience, so that "he that is filthy becometh filthier still" (Apoc. xxii. 11), "inclining his heart to evil words, to make excuses in sins" (Ps. cxl. 4), and, like a madman, not only repelling, but even trying to bite the hand of the physician. There are many also who lack fluency of speech, so that for want of words their tongue seems "to stick fast to the roof of their mouth" (Ezech. iii. 26), often with no slight disadvantage to their hearers. Others again there are who have eloquence enough, yet what they say is not relished, is

* "Et semel emissum volat irrevocabile verbum."—Horace, Ep. lib. i. xviii. 71.

not pleasing; and because their words are without unction they are less efficacious. Thou perceivest, therefore, how necessary it is to buy the spices of moderation in reproof, fluency in exhortation, and efficacy in persuasion of Him Who is the Source of every good gift and of all knowledge.

Now for these spices of the tongue thou must pay the price of confession: I mean to say, thou oughtest to confess thine own sins before thou undertakest to purge away the sins of thy brothers. Truly a great and admirable mystery is the resuscitation of a soul to the life of grace: see thou approach it not with hands unclean. But if thou canst not perhaps be entirely pure, nay, rather, *because* thou canst not be entirely pure, at least wash thy hands among the innocents before thou presumest to compass the sepulchre of the Lord (Ps. xxv. 6). For all things are washed clean in confession.* And this purification shall be accounted to thee as the spotlessness of innocence, so that thou mayest associate with the innocent. No one ascends to the altar of the Lord in common garments to celebrate the Sacred Mysteries, but whosoever would approach, first clothes himself in white. Do thou likewise, when thou hastenest to the sepulchre of the Lord, wash thyself, purify thyself, "put on the garments of thy glory" (Is. lii. 1), so that to thee also it may be said, "Thou hast clothed thyself with confession and beauty" (Ps. ciii. 1): because where there is confession, there also is beauty in the sight of the Lord (Ps. xcv. 6). I have now said enough to show

* "Omnia in confessione lavantur"; these words are found so often in the works of St. Bernard that they must be regarded as a quotation. So far, however, I have not been able to trace them to their source.—(Translator.)

you that confession is the price we must pay for the spices which appertain to the tongue, to wit, moderation in reproof, fluency in exhortation, and efficacy in persuasion.

We are told,* however, and we are taught by daily experience that if the life of the preacher does not command respect, neither shall his words. Consequently, let thy hand also procure for itself its proper spices, lest the Wise Man mock at thee as one who through sloth "hideth his hand under his arm-pit and will not so much as bring it to his mouth" (Prov. xix. 24), and lest he whom thou reprovest answer thee in the words of St. Paul, "Thou that teachest another, teachest not thyself" (Rom. ii. 21). For thou dost "bind heavy and insupportable burdens, and lay them on men's shoulders; but with a finger of thine own thou wilt not move them" (Matt. xxiii. 4). Believe me, brethren, the most "living and effectual" (Heb. iv. 12) mode of preaching is the preaching of good example; because we easily bring home to our hearers what we desire to impress upon them when they recognise in our own conduct an illustration of the truths we proclaim. But for this it is necessary to have the spices proper to the hand. These are: continence of the flesh, indulgence for our brethren, patience in piety. It is to the same spices the Apostle appears to be alluding where he says, "We should live soberly and justly, and piously in this world" (Titus ii. 12). These three virtues are in truth most essential to the perfection of our lives. We owe the first to ourselves, the second to our neighbours, the third to God. "He

* "Cujus vita despicitur restat ut ejus praedicatio contemnatur."—Pope St. Gregory the Great, Homil. ii. super Evang.

that committeth fornication," says the Apostle, "sinneth against his own body" (1 Cor. vi. 18), depriving it of its greatest glory, and condemning it to fearful and shameful disgrace, because he "taketh the members of Christ and maketh them the members of a sinner" (ibid. 15). But it is not enough to abstain from the most revolting acts of this vice: we are bound to avoid every kind of carnal pleasure. Therefore, before all things, strive after this perfection of holy continence which thou owest to thyself, because there is no one nearer and dearer to thee than thyself. To continence add the indulgence which is due from thee to thy neighbour, because thy own salvation is bound up with his. And with these two unite the third virtue of patience which thou owest to God, by Whom alone thou must hope to be saved. With regard to the necessity of patience, the Apostle tells thee, "All that will live piously in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. iii. 12), and, "Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts xiv. 21). Beware, then, of offending by impatience, but bear all things for the love of Christ Who endured greater sufferings for thy sake, and with Whom thy patience shall not pass unrewarded, as the Psalmist promises where he sings, "The patience of the poor shall not perish for ever" (Ps. ix. 19).

Humble submission to authority is the price we must pay for these three spices of the hand. This is the virtue which guides our steps and merits for us the grace of a holy life. For if that opposing law of concupiscence which we find in our members (Rom. vii. 23) has been established there by disobedience (Gen. iii. 7), who does not see that continence is the fruit of sub-

mission? It is by obedience also that indulgence can be best regulated, and it is by the same virtue that patience is both taught and bestowed. When, therefore, thou hast bought all these sweet spices, approach the brother in whom faith is dead. But, my brethren, if we consider how mighty is the work we are undertaking, viz., to awaken to life one spiritually dead, and how difficult it is even to reach his heart, covered over as it is with the sepulchral slab of obstinacy and impudence, I think we too shall have to say with the holy women, "Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" (Mark xvi. 4). Nevertheless, whilst we thus stand trembling and fear to approach, hesitating because of the magnitude of the hoped-for miracle, it sometimes happens that the ear of the Lord "hears the preparation of our heart" (Ps. x. 17, juxta Heb.), and at the voice of His power (Ps. lxvii. 34) the dead man arises. And behold, the unwonted joy radiating from his countenance appears to us like an angel of the Lord at the door of the sepulchre; the brightness of his aspect gives us an assurance of his resurrection. His looks are manifestly changed; he now freely opens his heart to us, yea, invites us to enter, rolling back the obstructing stone of his obstinacy and sitting upon it (Matt. xxviii. 2). Furthermore, his faith that was dead being now revived, he himself points out to us the winding-sheet in which it was wrapped. And whilst he reveals to us all the emotions which have been agitating his mind, and confesses how he had buried himself within his own heart, acknowledging with candour his tepidity and indifference, "come," he seems to say "come and see the place where the Lord was laid" (Matt. xxviii. 6).

THIRD SERMON FOR EASTER.

On the Seven Species of Spiritual Leprosy on account of which we have to wash seven times in the Spiritual Jordan, and on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost represented by the Seven Apparitions of the Risen Christ.

"*Go, wash seven times in the Jordan, and thou shalt be made clean.*"—4 Kings v. 10.

It is the practice of medical doctors to begin the cure of their patients with purgatives and afterwards to make use of restoratives, so that the sick body is first relieved of its noxious humours, and then strengthened with nourishing food. The same order of treatment has been adopted in the healing of our souls by the Lord Jesus Christ, our Spiritual Physician, Whose whole earthly life is for us the medicine of salvation. For before His passion He subjected us to seven different purifications, and nourished us as often with strengthening aliments after His resurrection. Our divine Eliseus ordered the spiritual leper, Naaman, to wash seven times in the Jordan (4 Kings v. 10), a name which signifies "descent." For in the descent of our Lord Jesus Christ, that is to say, in the humility of the life which He led before His passion, we are cleansed and purified; whilst the glorious life which He lived on earth for forty days after His resurrection reanimates and refreshes us as with sweet and

nutritious food. Pride, my brethren, has infected us with a sevenfold leprosy, in the proprietorship of earthly goods, in the glory of vesture, in bodily gratifications, in two ways with regard to the mouth, and in two ways with regard to the heart. The first may be called the "leprosy of the house" (Lev. xiv. 36). From this we may be purified by bathing in the Jordan, that is, by steeping our souls in the thought of the descent of Christ. For we shall thus realise how He Who was so rich became so poor for our sakes; how He descended from the unspeakable riches of His heavenly home, and, appearing upon earth, would not have even the wealth—such as it is—of this world, but came in such utter poverty that immediately after His birth He had to be laid in a manger, "because there was no room for Him in the inn" (Luke ii. 7). In short, who does not know that "the Son of man had not where to lay His head" (Matt. viii. 20)? How can the riches of earth become an object of desire to him who bathes himself thoroughly in this mystery by assiduous meditation? Surely it must seem to be a great abuse, yea, a most monstrous perversity, that a vile little worm wants to be wealthy, when, for its sake, the God of Majesty and the Lord of Hosts has willed to make Himself poor.

By the leprosy of the garments (Lev. xiii. 47) I mean all the foolish pomp and vanity of the present life. From this also thou shalt be cleansed by washing in the Jordan, that is, by pondering how Christ the Lord was wrapped in poor swaddling clothes, was made "the reproach of men and the outcast of the people" (Ps. xxi. 7). The leprosy of the flesh likewise can be cured by washing in the Jordan, for he who meditates

diligently on the passion of Christ will be ashamed to indulge in bodily pleasures. The mouth, as I have said, is infected with two kinds of leprosy, For whenever any adversity befalls us, we begin to murmur, and our words of impatience flow out like the corruption from a leprous sore. From this we shall be purified if we turn our thoughts to Him Who was "led as a sheep to the slaughter" and "opened not His mouth" (Is. liii. 7), and who "when He was reviled, did not revile, when He suffered He threatened not" (1 Peter ii. 23). In prosperity, again, in spite of what St. Paul says, "Not he who commendeth himself is approved, but he whom God commendeth" (2 Cor. x. 18), in spite of this we do in fact commend ourselves, and not "in much patience" (2 Cor. vi. 4) but rather with much impudence. Thus we contract another species of leprosy of the mouth, the leprosy of boastfulness. If we desire to be cleansed from this also, we must wash ourselves again in the Jordan, by imitating Him Who sought not His own glory (John viii. 50): for when the demons were proclaiming Him to be the Son of God, He commanded them to be silent (Luke iv. 34, 35), and He also forbade the blind men whose eyes He had opened to publish the miracle abroad (Matt. ix. 30).

The heart, likewise, is the seat of a twofold leprosy, namely, self-will and obstinate attachment to one's own judgment. Most malignant are both these species of leprosy, and so much the more dangerous for that they are interior. Now by self-will I mean a will that is not common to us with God and our fellow-men, but exclusively our own: when we will whatever we will, not for the glory of God or the profit of our neigh-

bour, but solely for our own sakes,—not with any intention of pleasing the Lord or benefitting our brethren, but simply of satisfying the desires of our own hearts. To this vice charity, which is God (1 John iv. 8-16), is directly opposed. For self-will is at enmity with God and wages against Him a most relentless war. What indeed does God hate or punish but self-will? Let there be no self-will, and there shall be no hell. For is not self-will the very fuel upon which hell-fire shall for ever feed? And even now, whenever we endure inconvenience from cold or hunger or any other such natural cause, what is made to suffer but self-will? But if we voluntarily submit to these pains, our wills are now made common. Nevertheless there yet remains a certain infirmity and, as it were, prurience of the will, which comes from what is proper to ourselves, and it is this which makes us still liable to all kinds of suffering until it has entirely disappeared. I call it an infirmity or weakness of the will, not the will itself, because the name "will" properly designates the power whereby we give *deliberate* assent or exercise acts of free choice. As for those desires and concupiscences to which we are involuntarily subjected, they are rather a corruption of the will than the will itself. Hear now, ye slaves of self-will, with what fury this same self-will attacks the Lord of Majesty; hear, and be afraid. By making itself its own, it revolts and withdraws itself from His dominion Whom, as its Creator, it is bound in justice to serve. Perhaps it is content with doing Him so much injury? Not at all. It must needs go further and, so far as it has the power, it appropriates and plunders everything that belongs to God. For what bounds does human cupidity ever

fix for itself? Take the man who by usury has acquired a modest fortune: would he not likewise endeavour to make the whole universe his own, if only it were possible, if only the power were not wanting to his good-will? I say it boldly: the whole wide world would not be enough for the man who is the slave of self-will. And would to God it were satisfied with appropriating all such created things, and did not, horrible to say! attempt to lay violent hands upon the Creator Himself. As a matter of fact, however, self-will, so far as depends upon it, annihilates the Lord of glory. For it would certainly be glad that God lacked either the knowledge of its faults or the power or the will to punish them. It wishes consequently that He should not be God, since, if it had its way, it would have Him to be either ignorant or impotent or unjust. How cruel and abominable is that malice which could wish to see God deprived of His wisdom, or of His power, or of His justice! Oh, surely then, self-will is a cruel beast, a most treacherous wild animal, a rapacious wolf, the fiercest of lionesses. It is that most horrible leprosy of the soul, on account of which we have to wash ourselves in the Jordan by the imitation of Him Who came not to do His own will (John vi. 38), and Who said in His passion, "Not My will but Thine be done" (Luke xxii. 42).

But bad as this is, the leprosy of undue attachment to one's own judgment is still worse, in proportion as it is more secret. And what adds to the danger of this latter kind is that the more it increases the healthier its victim considers himself to be. It is the form of leprosy proper to them who "have a zeal of God but not according to knowledge" (Rom. x. 2), who follow

out their error and remain obstinate in it, refusing to take counsel of anyone. Persons thus infected become the destroyers of concord, the enemies of peace, being void of charity, swollen with vanity, lovers of themselves, great in their own conceit, "not knowing the justice of God and seeking to establish their own" (Rom. x. 3). What greater pride can be imagined than that a single individual should prefer his own judgment to the opinion of the entire community, as if he alone possessed the Spirit of God? "It is like the sin of witch-craft to rebel, and like the crime of idolatry to refuse to obey" (1 Kings xv. 23). What say ye to this, ye that repute yourselves more religious than your neighbours, ye that will not be "as the rest of men" (Luke xviii. 11)? For behold, you are become as magicians and idolators, if yet you allow even the Holy Spirit, Who inspired these words, to be more worthy of credit than yourselves. Nor at variance with this is the testimony of Truth, which He spoke, saying, "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican" (Matt. xviii. 17). But where can such leprosy be purged away except in the Jordan? Plunge in there, whosoever thou art that findest thyself to be infected with this foul disease, plunge into the Jordan, I say, and consider how the "Angel of the great counsel" acted; how, in preference to His own counsel, He followed the counsel or rather the will of a single woman, I mean the Blessed Virgin, and of a poor tradesman, St. Joseph. Thus, on one occasion, when He was found "in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions" His Mother gently rebuked Him, saying, "Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Behold thy Father and I

have sought Thee sorrowing." To which He answered, "How is it that you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business? And they understood not the word that He spoke unto them." What, therefore, did the Word do? He remained not in Himself, but "He descended" to such a degree that He "was subject to them" (Luke ii. 46-51). Who now will not be ashamed to remain obstinately in his own counsel after seeing Wisdom incarnate forsaking His? And Christ seems to have so changed His counsel, in obedience to His parents, that the work which He had begun at this time, when He was in the twelfth year of His age, He postponed until His thirtieth. For from this until He attained His thirtieth year you will hear nothing concerning either His works or His teaching.

But perhaps we ought to inquire of Himself in what way He renounced His own will and His own judgment. O Lord, as to that will, concerning which Thou didst pray that it should not be done, if it was not a good will, how was it Thine? And if it was a good will, wherefore didst Thou renounce it? Similarly, with regard to the judgment or counsel, if it was not good, how could it have been Thine? And if good, why ought it to have been forsaken? The truth is that both the will and the judgment were good and both were His; they were abandoned, nevertheless, but only to give place to what was better. For it was not becoming that what was private and individual should prejudice what was common. It was therefore the will of Christ, and a good will, which found expression in the words, 'My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me" (Matt. xxvi. 39). But

better was that other will whereof He said, "Thy will be done" (Luke xxii. 42). I say it was better, because it was common, belonging not alone to the Father, but also to Christ—"He was offered because it was His own will" (Is. liii. 7)—and even to us. For "unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John xii. 24-25). Now this was the will of the Father, that He should have whom He might adopt as sons; it was the will of Christ, "that He might be the first-born amongst many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29); and the same was our will, because it was much to our advantage that we should be redeemed. With regard to judgment the same remarks apply. It was undoubtedly a judgment of Christ, and a good judgment, that which He expressed in the words, "I must be about My Father's business." But because His parents did not understand, He changed His counsel, in order to cleanse us from the leprosy of undue attachment to our own judgment. He gave us an example, that as He has done so we should do also (John xiii. 15). He knew indeed from the beginning what He was going to do; but He desired to give us this pattern of humility, and to prepare in His own Self a divine Jordan wherein we could wash ourselves clean from this worst kind of leprosy. Therefore, let both these classes of lepers, the self-willed and the self-opinioned, attend and "hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches" (Apoc. ii. 7). In one short verse He condemns both the leprosy of the will and that of the judgment, declaring by the Apostle, "The wisdom that is from above, first indeed is chaste"—to exclude the impurity of self-will—"then peaceable" (James iii. 17)—to exclude the obstinate resistence of self-judgment.

Now, when the sick man has been purified from these seven leprosies, as by seven immersions in the Jordan, let him seek for seven dishes of strengthening food, by which I mean the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost (Is. xi. 2, 3). And just as we discover seven purifications in the life of our Lord before His passion, in the same way we can find the seven gifts of the Spirit in the seven apparitions recorded to have taken place after His resurrection. Thus the spirit of the fear of the Lord is represented to us in the first apparition, when, on the arrival of the holy women at the sepulchre, "an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and behold there was a great earthquake," so that, being overwhelmed with fear, they (the women) required to be consoled by the angel (Matt. xxviii. 1-5). The apparition to Simon was in the spirit of piety (Luke xxiv. 34), because it was indeed a great condescension of piety and truly worthy of the Lord Jesus, that He vouchsafed to show Himself particularly and sooner than to the rest to that Apostle who was confounded beyond the rest with the guilt of his conscience, by reason of his triple denial; so that, "where sin abounded, grace might more abound" (Rom. v. 20). It was in the spirit of knowledge that "He expounded the Scriptures" to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets" (Luke xxiv. 27). In the spirit of fortitude He entered the chamber where the disciples were assembled, the doors being shut, and "shewed them His Hands and His Side" (John xx. 19, 20), just as veteran soldiers are wont to point out the dents on their shields in proof of their valour. In the spirit of counsel He told the Apostles, who had been fishing

all night and caught nothing, to "cast the net on the right side of the ship" (John xxi. 6). With regard to others of His disciples, "He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures" (Luke xxiv. 45), and that in the spirit of understanding. Finally, He manifested Himself to His followers in the spirit of wisdom on that fortieth day, when, "whilst they looked on, He was raised up" (Acts i. 9), and they saw "the Son of Man ascend up where He was before" (John vi. 63). For until that day He had sought "by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believed" (1 Cor. i. 21); but now His wisdom began to be revealed to them, after He had ascended in their sight to the Father.

SERMON FOR LOW SUNDAY.

On the Faith that overcometh the World and on the Three Witnesses.

"Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world. And this is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"—1 John v. 4, 5.

"Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world" (1 John v. 4). My brethren, since the only begotten Son of God, Who "thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Phil. ii. 6), has condescended to become also the Son of man; men, despite their poverty, may presume not unreasonably to regard themselves as God's children. Nor is it anything unworthy of God to become the Father of them of whom Christ has made Himself the Brother. Hence it is that St. John (who speaks so often and so earnestly about our adoption as sons of God) tells us at the very beginning of his Gospel, that "as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God" (John i. 12). These words are in perfect harmony with the passage you heard recited to-day from the same author's Epistle, "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." For all who belong to Christ are, like Christ Himself, hated by the world, but like Christ also they overcome the world. "Be not surprised," He says, "if the world hate you: know you that it hath hated Me before you" (John xv. 18). And again, "Have confidence: I have overcome the world" (John xvi. 33). So manifestly

true are the words spoken by St. Paul: "whom He, viz., God the Father, foreknew, He also predestined to be made conformable to the image of His Son" (Rom. viii. 29). For see how close is the conformity of the members with the Head: after Him, they have been adopted, "that He might be the first-born amongst many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29); after Him they are hated by the world; after Him they overcome the world.

Well, therefore, is it said that "whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world," so that the triumph over temptation is in itself a testimony to our divine sonship; and just as He Who is the Son of God by nature vanquished the world and its prince, so we too have been found victorious, as many of us, I mean, as are sons by adoption. Victorious truly, but "in Him Who strengtheneth" us, in Whom we "can do all things" (Phil. iv. 13): because "this is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith" (1 John v. 4). For it is by faith we have been made the adoptive children of God; it is the faith in us that the world, which is "wholly seated in wickedness" (1 John v. 19) hates and persecutes; and it is by faith also that the world is conquered, according to what is written, "The saints by faith conquered kingdoms" (Heb. xi. 33). Why should not the victory of the just man be attributed to faith, since to it he owes even his life? "The just man," says the Apostle, "liveth by faith" (Rom. i. 17). Therefore, my brethren, as often as you resist temptation, as often as you vanquish the wicked one, do not attribute the triumph to your own powers, do not take pride in yourselves, but rather "glory in the Lord," as the Apostle enjoins (1 Cor. i. 31). For when would that "strong man armed" (Luke xi. 21)

have yielded to your impotence? Listen lastly to the admonition addressed to you by the divinely appointed pastor of the Lord's flock, "Your adversary the devil," he says, "as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist ye, strong in faith" (1 Peter v. 8, 9). Notice how completely in accord are these testimonies of truth: St. Paul tells us that by faith the saints conquered kingdoms; St. Peter that it is by faith we must resist the prince of this world; whilst St. John says, in his turn, "This is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith."

The last named author goes on to ask, "Who is He that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John v. 5). Indeed it is certain that every man who believes not in the Son of God is by this fact alone not merely overcome, but judged also (John iii. 18). For "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. xi. 6). But perhaps the minds of some of you are now perplexed by the thought that we see so many who believe Jesus to be the Son of God, and who are nevertheless enslaved to worldly desires. Wherefore, then, does the Evangelist say, "Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" since even the world itself professes to believe this? Yea, and does not another inspired author tell us that "the devils also believe and tremble" (James ii. 19)? But let me ask: do you suppose Jesus is really reputed the Son of God by that man, whosoever he may be, who is neither frightened by His threats nor attracted by His promises, who is neither obedient to His commands nor acquiescent to His counsels? Is not such a one of the number of those of whom the Apostle says,

"They profess that they know God, but in their works they deny Him" (Titus i. 16)? Besides, "faith without works is dead" (James ii. 20) in itself. We ought not therefore, to be surprised that it does not triumph over the world, since it does not so much as live.

Perhaps you would like to know, my brethren, what is the faith that lives and triumphs? It is that faith doubtless, whereby Christ dwelleth in our hearts (Ephes. iii. 17). For Christ is both our strength and our life: "When Christ shall appear, Who is your life," says the Apostle, "then you also shall appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4). Now, how is glory obtained except through victory? Or wherefore should we appear with Christ in glory unless we have conquered in Him also? In short, if they alone who receive Christ are given "the power to be made the sons of God" (John i. 12) it is likewise of them alone that we must understand the words of St. John, "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." Hence it is that the same Evangelist, after saying, "Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"—as if in order to render it still more indubitable that the faith he is commending is that whereby, as I have said, Christ dwelleth in our hearts—proceeds forthwith to add what relates to His coming to us, "This is He that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ" (1 John v. 6). But as if "showing unto us a yet more excellent way" (1 Cor. xii. 31), he continues, "and it is the Spirit Which testifieth that Christ is the Son of God" (1 John v. 6).* As for the apparently

* This appears to be a misquotation. The Vulgate reading is: "And it is the Spirit Which testifieth that Christ is the truth."—(Translator.)

irrelevant words, repeated with such deliberation, "not by water only, but by water and blood," I think they are designed to mark a difference between Christ and Moses. For Moses came "by water only," to which indeed he owes his very name.*

Let those among you who are acquainted with the Old Testament history recall to mind how in Egypt of yore it was commanded that all male infants of the Hebrew stock should be put to death, and how Moses as a child, was exposed by the river and taken up by Pharao's daughter (Exod. 1, 11). Consider if we have not here a manifest prefiguration of Christ. King Herod, after King Pharao, in order to allay the fears which disquieted him, had recourse to the same remedy of cruelty, and was in the same way deluded. In both cases, a multitude of children were slaughtered on account of one, and in both cases the one who was sought for escaped unhurt. And just as the daughter of Pharao took charge of and saved the infant Moses, so did Egypt—which may be regarded not unreasonably as also the daughter of Pharao—receive and preserve the infant Christ. But evidently, "a greater than Moses is here" (Matt. xii. 41), since Christ "came not by water only, but by water and blood." Now "many waters are peoples." as we read in the Apocalypse (Apoc. xvii. 15). *He* therefore came by water alone who gathered his people together indeed, yet did not save his people. For even the deliverance from Egyptian bondage was due not to Moses but to the blood of the lamb, thus prefiguring that we were to be emancipated from the vain conversation of this world by the Blood of the Immaculate Lamb of God, Christ

* "Moses" signifies in the Egyptian tongue "one saved out of the waters." Cf. Exod. ii.—(Translator.)

Jesus. He is our true Lawgiver, with Whom there is "plentiful redemption" (Ps. cxxix. 7). For He died "not only for the nation, but to gather together in one the children of God that were dispersed" (John xi. 52). Pray remember, it is John the Evangelist himself who hath seen and "giveth testimony—and we know that his testimony is true" (John xxi. 24)—that from the Heart of the Lord whilst He hung lifeless upon the cross "there came out blood and water" (John xix. 34); so that, namely, from the side of the New Adam, as He slumbered in death, might be produced and at the same time redeemed the New Eve, that is to say, the Church.

In this manner, then, does He come to us to-day also by water and by blood, so that water and blood are an evidence of His advent and of the faith that triumphs. But we have more than the testimony of these: a greater is that which is given by the Spirit of Truth. Most true and certain, therefore, is the united testimony of these three witnesses (Matt. xviii. 16) and happy the soul that deserves to receive it. "There are three that give testimony on earth: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood" (1 John v. 8). The water signifies baptism; the blood, martyrdom; and the Spirit, charity: for "it is the Spirit that quickeneth" (John vi. 64), and love is the life of faith. If you further inquire of me what the Spirit has to do with charity, I shall answer in the words of St. Paul, "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost Who is given to us" (Rom. v. 5). Of necessity also is the Spirit united to the water and the blood, since, as the Apostle testifies, anything whatever that we may have is of no avail without charity (1 Cor. xiii. 1-3).

But since I have just observed that baptism is symbolised by the water and martyrdom by the blood, remember also that besides the baptism which can be received only once, there is a second which can be daily repeated; and the same with regard to martyrdom. For we endure a kind of martyrdom and, so to speak, a shedding of blood, in our daily mortification of the body; whilst compunction of heart and the frequent flow of contrite tears may be called a spiritual baptism. Thus for the weak and faint-hearted, who have not the courage to pour out all their blood at once for Christ's sake, it is necessary to shed it drop by drop, as it were, in a martyrdom milder, indeed, yet more protracted. Thus also they who often "offend in many things" (James iii. 2), ought to supply for the sacrament of baptism, which cannot be renewed, by frequent spiritual ablutions, following herein the example of David, who sang of himself, "Every night I will wash my bed: I will water my couch with my tears" (Ps. vi. 7). Do you wish, then, my brethren, to know who it is that overcometh the world? First consider more carefully what forces have to be overcome in it. And these also are pointed out to us by the blessed John, who says, "Dearly beloved, love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. For all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John ii. 15, 16). These are the "three troops" which the Chaldean made (Job i. 17). And I remember how holy Jacob likewise made three companies when he was returning from Mesopotamia and feared the face of his brother Esau (Gen. xxxii. 2). Therefore you also have need of a triple defence against the triple temptation to whose attacks you are exposed. You must conquer the con-

cupiscence of the flesh by means of bodily mortification, which I have told you, if you remember, is what we are to understand by the testimony of the blood. You must conquer the concupiscence of the eyes by compunction of heart and the frequent shedding of contrite tears—the testimony of the water. And let the vanity of pride be overcome and driven forth by the virtue of charity, which alone has power to chasten the soul and to purify the intention; this is the testimony of the Spirit. It is an infallible sign that the world has been overcome by you if you "chastise your body and bring it into subjection" (1 Cor. ix. 27), lest by abuse of its liberty it should become the slave of pleasure; if you give up your eyes to mourning rather than to curiosity or to arrogance; and if, finally, your hearts are so filled with divine love that there is no room left for the love of vanity.

With just reason, doubtless, does the Evangelist say that one and the same Spirit giveth testimony both in heaven and on earth (1 John v. 7, 8): because although bodily mortification shall cease, and the fountain of tears shall at length run dry, "charity never falleth away" (1 Cor. xiii. 8). In the present life we are given only a foretaste—so to speak—of charity, the fulness and consummation is reserved for the life to come. But although the Spirit survives after the water and the blood—for water and blood "cannot possess the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. xv. 50)—in this life, however, it is almost or indeed absolutely impossible to find the Spirit without the other two witnesses;* for, as the Evangelist says, "these three are one"

* That is to say, charity cannot exist on earth apart from contrition and bodily mortification, although it alone shall gain admission to heaven.—(Translator.)

(1 John v. 8). Consequently, whenever any one of the three is wanting, we cannot suppose the other two present. But when the three are united, their "testimonies are made exceedingly credible" (Ps. xcii. 5); nor can he who possesses them on earth be in want of testimony even in heaven. For such a one confesseth the Son of God before men "not in word, nor in tongue, but in deed, and in truth" (1 John iii. 18), and the Son will confess him before the angels of God (Matt x. 32). And do you suppose the Father can be wanting in testimony to him to whom He beholds His Son bearing testimony? No, the Father also will most assuredly confess him, and testify to what He has seen "in secret" (Matt. vi. 4). Neither shall the Spirit be out of accord with the Father and the Son, for the reason that He is the Spirit of the Father and the Son. Besides, how can *he* lack the Spirit's testimony in heaven, who has merited to possess it even on earth? Therefore "there are Three Who give testimony in heaven: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost" (1 John v. 7). And lest we should suspect any discord in Their testimony, the Evangelist adds, "And these Three are One" (ibid.). Surely, then, a glorious testimony shall they have whom the Father shall receive in heaven as children and heirs, whom the Son shall acknowledge as brothers and co-heirs (Rom. viii. 17), whom the Holy Ghost shall cause to cleave to God and make "one Spirit with Him" (1 Cor. vi. 17). For the Holy Ghost is the indissoluble Bond of the Blessed Trinity, by Whom, as the Father and Son are One, so are we also one in Them (John xvii. 21), through the mercy of Him who vouchsafed to pray for this for His disciples, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

SECOND SERMON FOR LOW SUNDAY.

On the Manner in which the Triple Testimony in Heaven and on Earth distinguishes the Good from the Bad amongst Angels and Men.

"*There are Three Who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and there are three that give testimony on earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood.*" —John v. 7, 8.

To-day, my brethren, we have heard recited to us from the first Epistle of St. John, a lesson in which we are told of a threefold testimony given in heaven, and of a threefold testimony given on earth. And according to my own judgment, the former testimony signifies stability, the latter restoration; the former concerns the angels and distinguishes the blessed from the miserable, the latter relates to men and separates the just from the impious. For the angels who "stood in the truth" (John viii. 44) in that primeval violation of order when the proud Lucifer rebelled, receive testimony—as they deserve—from the vision of the Trinity; whilst the Spirit, the water, and the blood give testimony to men who are saved through the divine compassion. Why should not the Father render testimony to them by whom He is honoured as a Father? But to thee, O wicked one, He speaketh thus, "If I be a Father, where is My honour?" (Mal. i. 6). Thou must, therefore, be deprived altogether of the Father's testimony, Whose glory thou endeavourest to appropriate, desiring, not to honour Him, but rather to make thyself His equal. "I will sit," thou saidest,

" in the mountain of the covenant, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the Most High " (Is. xvi. 13, 14). So soon after thy creation, dost thou aspire to an equality with " the Father of spirits " (Heb. xii. 9) ? Certainly, He has not yet given *thee* the invitation, " Sit thou at My right hand " (Ps. cix. 1). If thou art ignorant of the fact, O most impudent one, the Only-Begotten it is to Whom, in virtue of His eternal generation, belongs co-equality with the Father and the right to sit on His throne. But thou, knowing that for thee it is " robbery to be equal with God " (Phil. ii. 6), enviest the glory of the Son, " the glory as it were of the Only-Begotten of the Father " (John i. 14), so that from Him likewise thou deservest to have no testimony. As to the Holy Ghost, is it possible that one abhorred by the Father and the Son shall have testimony in his favour from Him Who is the Spirit of Both ? No, undoubtedly not, He Who " resteth upon the humble and quiet " (Is. lxvi. 2, juxta LXX) will spurn the proud and restless ; the Lover of peace and the Preserver of concord will fight against thee in behalf of peace and concord.

Is it any wonder, my brethren, that I fear lest the " singular wild beast " (Ps. lxxix. 14) should begin to ravage this little vineyard of the Lord ? For how many vines of the heavenly vineyard have not been ruined by him who was the first to give an example of singularity ! But perhaps you find it easier to detect his pride than to discover wherein he was singular. Listen to me, therefore, When all the angels were standing, was not he manifestly guilty of the sin of singularity who presumptuously determined to seat himself ?

Perhaps you would like to ask me how I know that the angels were standing? I have the testimony of two credible witnesses, both of whom attest what they beheld with their own eyes. "I saw the Lord," says Isaias, "sitting upon a throne high and elevated, and His train filled the temple. Upon it stood the seraphims" (Is. vi. 1, 2). And Daniel, "Thousands of thousands ministered to Him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before Him" (Dan. vii. 10). Shall I bring forward even a third attester, "that in the mouth of three witnesses every word may stand" (Matt. xviii. 16)? Listen, then, to the Apostle, who was "rapt even to the third heaven" (2 Cor. xii. 2), and on his return said, "Are they not all ministering spirits?" (Heb. i. 14). And so whilst all the rest stand, whilst all minister, wilt thou alone, the enemy of peace, be seated? Evidently thou dost "grieve the holy Spirit of God" (Ephes. iv. 30), "Who maketh men of one manner to dwell in a house" (Ps. lxvii. 7); thou sinnest against charity by dissolving unity and breaking "the bond of peace" (Ephes. iv. 3). Justly, therefore, does the Holy Spirit, whilst reprobating thy envy and singularity and turbulence, render testimony to the charity, unity, and peace of the angels who forsook neither their rank nor their dwelling. So much for the triple testimony which is given in heaven.

There is (as I have said) another triple testimony rendered on earth, to distinguish the exiles from the natives, that is to say, the citizens of heaven from the citizens of Babylon. For how could God ever leave His elect without testimony? (Acts xiv. 16). Or what consolation could they have, wavering in anxious

solicitude between hope and fear, if they deserved to receive no assurance at all as to their election? "The Lord knoweth who are His" (2 Tim. ii. 19), and He alone knoweth whom He hath elected from the beginning (Ephes. i. 4). But who amongst men "knoweth whether he be worthy of love or hatred" (Eccles. ix. 1)? But if absolute certitude in this matter is altogether denied us, as it unquestionably is, will not such probable signs of our election as we may be able to discover be all the more consoling for that very reason? For what rest can our spirits enjoy so long as we lack every testimony of our predestination? "A faithful saying, therefore, and worthy of all acceptation" (1 Tim. i. 15) is that which commends to us the testimonies of our salvation. That "saying" assuredly gives comfort to the elect and leaves no excuse to the reprobate. For now that the signs of life are known, whosoever neglects them is proved thereby to have "taken his soul in vain" (Ps. xxiii. 4), and stands convicted of "setting at nought the desirable land" (Ps. cv. 24).

"There are three," writes the Evangelist, "that give testimony on earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood." You know, my brethren, that we all sinned in the first man, and that in his fall we all had a share. We fell into a prison, upon a place full of mud and stones. There we lay, captive, begrimed, and badly bruised, until "the Desired of all nations" (Agg. ii. 8) came to redeem, to cleanse, and to cure us. For it is He Who gave His own Blood for our redemption, Who poured out water from His side for our cleansing, and sent His Holy Spirit from on high to support our infirmity. Wouldst thou know, then, my brother, whether these

three remedies have proved effective in thy case—lest perchance thou be found "guilty of the blood of the Lord" (1 Cor. xi. 27) by doing what in thee lies to rob It of Its fruit—lest the water likewise, which should have cleansed thee, only makes still heavier the judgment of damnation reserved for one who perseveres in his filthiness, and lest the Spirit also Whom thou resistest "will not acquit the evil speaker from his lips" (Wisdom i. 6)? For thou must be on thy guard to prevent them, viz., the Blood and the water and the Spirit, from being unprofitable in thy regard, since they cannot be rendered unprofitable without becoming also prejudicial.

Now, who is the man that has testimony that the Blood of Christ was not poured out for him in vain, but he who abandons his sins? For "whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John x. 34). Consequently, he who is able to avoid sin for the future and to cast off the yoke of so miserable a servitude has a most reliable testimony of his redemption, which he owes beyond doubt to the efficacy of the Blood of Christ. But abstinence from sin in the future is not enough for the sinner, unless there is also penitence for the past. He requires, therefore, a second testimony from the water. And this he possesses if, like the Psalmist, he "labours in his groanings" and "every night washes his couch with his tears" (Ps. vi. 7). For as we have been redeemed by the Blood so that "sin might no longer reign in our mortal body" (Rom. vi. 12), so must we be purified by the water from the sins we committed before. But what are we to do if, in consequence of our long endurance of chains and our cruel confinement in prison, our strength has been broken

and our health undermined, so that now we are unable to walk on in the way of life? Let us invoke our Helper, the vivifying Spirit, trusting that the "Father from heaven will give the good Spirit to them that ask Him" (Luke xi. 13). Now, the surest sign we can possess of our having received the Holy Spirit is the beginning of a new life of fervour. To recapitulate in short what I have been saying: we have testimony from the Blood, from the water, and from the Spirit when we abstain from sin, when we "bring forth fruit worthy of penance" (Matt. iii. 8), when we do the works of life.

SERMON FOR THE ROGATIONS.

On the Three Mystical Loaves.

"Which of you shall have a friend and shall go to him at midnight and shall say to him: Friend, lend me three loaves.
"Because a friend of mine is come off his journey to me, and I have not what to set before him.
"And he from within should answer and say: Trouble me not, the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed: I cannot rise and give thee.
"Yet if he shall continue knocking, I say to you, although he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.
"And I say to you: Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you.
"For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened."—Luke xi. 5-10.

"Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and shall say to him: Friend, lend me three loaves." How is it, my brethren, that he who announces the arrival of one friend is not content with demanding a single loaf of bread? Shall we suppose he considers his friend so voracious that one loaf would not be enough to satisfy his hunger? But it seems absurd to place three loaves of bread before a single guest. Take it, then, that the traveller has come with his wife and his servant, and that the friend wants one loaf for each. And further, it is my opinion that this friend who comes to me is none other than myself. For there can be no one nearer and dearer to me than my own self. My friend, therefore, comes "off his journey to me," when renouncing the things of this world, I "return to my heart," according to what is written, "Return, ye transgressors, to the

heart" (Is. xlvi. 8). It is then a man begins to be in truth his own friend, when he comes home to himself from his wanderings abroad, because, as the Psalmist says, "He that loveth iniquity, hateth his own soul" (Ps. x. 6). Accordingly, it is on the day of my conversion that the friend has come "off his journey to me." He has come from "a far country" where he used to "feed swine" and to long with insatiable appetite for "the husks the swine did eat" (Luke xv. 15, 16). He has come oppressed with hunger, weakened by privation, worn out from fasting. He has come because it is necessary for him to find a friend: but alas! he has elected to put up with so poor a host as I, and so has entered a house that is empty of bread. Now, what ought I to do for this friend, so wretched and miserable, because in truth "I have not what to set before him"? He is my friend, I acknowledge, but I am only a poor mendicant. Friend, wherefore art thou come to me, in thy so great necessity? I am a poor beggar and there is no bread in my house. To this he makes answer: "Run, then, with all haste and arouse that noble Friend of thine 'greater charity than Whose no man hath' (John xv. 13) or greater riches. 'Ask, seek, knock: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened' (Matt. vii. 7, 8). Cry aloud to Him and say, 'Friend lend me three loaves.'"

Now, my brethren, what are these three loaves? Would to God we were accounted worthy to receive them! For perhaps of them also it can be said that "no man knoweth them but he that receiveth" (Apoc. ii. 17). It appears to me, nevertheless, that the three loaves we ought to ask for are those of truth, charity,

and strength. Of these loaves I confess that I am in want, when my friend, accompanied, as I have remarked, by his wife and servant, comes "off his journey to me." For my understanding—which I may call the husband—fails me through ignorance of truth; and my will—that is, the wife—languishes from want of love; and my body—which is the servant—faints because it has no strength. My understanding knows not sufficiently what ought to be done, my will loves not the good revealed to it through the understanding; whilst "the corruptible body is a weight upon the soul" (Wisdom ix. 15), so that we cannot always do the good which we will (Rom. vii. 19). "My heart is withered—and my body too—because I forgot to eat my bread" (Ps. ci. 5). Yes, this is doubtless the reason: because I should not be now in so miserable a state, had my understanding been constantly exercised in the investigation of truth, my will in the aspirations of charity, and my body in the practice of good works. Lend me, therefore, O my Friend, lend me three loaves, that I may know, that I may love, and that I may do Thy will. For my true "life is such, and the life of my spirit in such things as these" (Is. xxxviii. 16). Hence the Psalmist says, "Sing to the Lord, all ye His saints, and give praise to the memory of His holiness: for wrath is in His indignation, and life in His good will" (Ps. xxix. 5, 6).

FIRST SERMON FOR THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION.

On the Signs of Faith and Salvation.

"*At length He appeared to the eleven as they were at table; and He upbraided them with their incredulity and hardness of heart because they did not believe them who had seen that He arose again.**

"*And He said to them: Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature.*

"*He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned.*

"*And these signs shall follow them that believe: In My name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;*

"*They shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay their hands upon the sick and they shall recover.*

"*And the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God.*

"*But they going forth preached everywhere: the Lord working withal and confirming the word with signs that followed.*" —Mark xvi. 14-20.

"At length He appeared to the eleven as they were at table." Truly, my brethren, "the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared" (Tit. iii. 4) in this manifestation. For if He disdains not to be present with us at our meals, more willingly, as we may trust, does He come to us when we pray. "The goodness of God our Saviour appeared," of Him, I say, Who "knoweth our frame" (Ps. cii. 14), and does not despise but rather pities our necessities, if yet we "make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences" (Rom.

* So the Saint understood the text, "qui viderant eum resurrexisse," which the Douay Translators have rendered, "Who had seen Him after He was risen again."—(Translator.)

xiii. 14), but only in its needs. It was of this the Apostle appears to have been thinking when he said, "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you do: do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. x. 31). But it is possible also to connect this apparition of the Lord to His disciples, whilst "they were at table," with the answer given on another occasion to the Jews, who were murmuring against the same disciples for that they did not fast: "Can the children of the Bridegroom mourn, as long as the Bridegroom is with them?" (Matt. ix. 15).

The Evangelist continues: "And He upbraided them with their incredulity and hardness of heart, because they did not believe them who had seen that He arose again." Attend to this, my brother, Christ reproves, yea, what sounds harsher, He even upbraids His disciples, and at that time particularly when He was on the point of withdrawing from them His bodily presence, and so, as it should seem, ought rather to have comforted them. For the future, then, let no feeling of anger rise within thee whenever thou art reproved by him who holds the place of Christ in thy regard. Thy superior in upbraiding thee, only deals with thee as Christ is recorded to have dealt with His disciples before ascending into heaven. But how are we to understand the words, "They did not believe them who had seen that He arose again"? Is it meant that there were those whose happy eyes merited to see the glorious miracle of the Lord's resurrection? Now we nowhere find, nor do we believe that any mortal witnessed His actual rising. It is therefore necessary to understand this of the angels whose testimony to the fact of the resurrection the pusillanimous apostles were so slow to accept.

But now, in order to fulfil what the Prophet had prayed to the Lord for, "Teach me goodness and discipline and knowledge" (Ps. cxviii. 66); the instruction of preaching also was added to the grace of the divine visitation and the discipline of reproof, when the risen Saviour said to His apostles, "Preach the Gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved." What shall we say to this, brethren? For the men of the world appear to derive excessive assurance from these latter words, and I fear lest they should begin to "make them an occasion to the flesh" (Gal. v. 13), presuming more than they ought on baptism and faith without works. But let us consider what is added, "And these signs shall follow them that believe. In My name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay their hands upon the sick and they shall recover." This passage may well seem to give even the pious themselves as much cause for despair as the preceding inspires worldlings with illusory confidence. For where shall we now find a man who appears to possess the signs of belief mentioned in this place? Yet without faith no one can be saved, for it is written, "He that believeth not shall be condemned," also, "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. xi. 6). Who now, I ask, casts out devils? or speaks with new tongues? or takes up serpents unharmed? What then? If, at the present time, these supernatural graces are found to belong either to none at all or only to very few, it seems to follow that either no one shall be saved, or those few alone who rejoice in the posses-

sion of such miraculous gifts.* Besides, the gifts in question are not so much merits in themselves as probable indications of merits. Hence, at the final judgment, many will say, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and cast out devils in Thy name, and done many miracles in Thy name?" And the Lord will answer, "I never knew you. Depart from Me, you that work iniquity" (Matt. vii. 22, 23). And I ask how shall that be fulfilled which the Apostle says, speaking of the just Judge, "Who will render to every man according to his works" (Rom. ii. 6), if—which God forbid!—it is of miracles rather than of merits that account shall be taken at the judgment?

However, good works are themselves a species of signs, and indeed surer and more salutary signs than any others. Nor do I think it difficult to see how we can interpret in this sense the signs recounted in our Gospel, so that they may be common and indubitable signs of belief, and also, by consequence, of salvation. Thus the first effect of "the faith that worketh by charity" (Gal. v. 6) is compunction of heart, by which beyond question devils are cast out with the vices which are expelled from the heart. In the next place, they who believe in Christ "speak with new tongues," since "old matters depart from their mouths" (1 Kings ii. 3), and they no longer use the old tongue of their disobedient first parents, by "inclining their hearts to evil words, to make excuses in sins" (Ps. cxl. 4). But now when they have blotted out their past sins by compunction of the heart and confession of the mouth, it is necessary, in order to avoid a relapse, that they

Cf. *Sermons on the Canticle of Canticles*, vol. ii. p. 32, note (Mount Melleray Translation).

shall "take up serpents," that is to say, they must promptly extinguish every evil suggestion. But what is to be done if perchance some of the old root of evil should sprout again—for it cannot be plucked out all at once, and the soul should be assailed by carnal concupiscence? Here, doubtless, applies what is said, "If they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them," because, after the example of the Saviour, they only taste, and refuse to swallow (Matt. xxvii. 33): I mean, there is consciousness of the uprising, but no consent. Now, apart from consent, the mere feeling of carnal desires can do us no hurt, because, "there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1). What more remains? Undoubtedly, the conflict we shall have to keep up against our morbid and corrupted affections will prove very painful, yea, and very dangerous: but they who believe "shall lay their hands upon the sick and they shall recover." That is to say, they shall cover their sickly affections with good works, and by this remedy restore them to health.

SECOND SERMON FOR THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION.

"*He that descended is the Same also That ascended above all the heavens that He might fill all things.*"—Ephes. iv. 10.

On the Glory of Christ's Ascension.

Glorious, dearest brethren, glorious and gladsome is the present solemnity, which gives to Christ such special honour and to us such special joy. It is indeed the crown and consummation of all the other festivities, and brings to a happy completion the journey of the Son of God. For "He That descended is the Same also That ascended above all the heavens, that He might fill all things" (Ephes. iv. 10). That is to say, having proved Himself the Supreme Lord of all things that are on the earth, in the sea, and in hell, it only remained for Him to show by similar, or rather by more convincing proofs, that He is also Lord of air and sky. The earth recognised Him as its Lord, because at "His voice, the voice of power" (Ps. lxvii. 34), when "He cried out with a loud voice: Lazarus, come forth" (John xi. 43), it gave up the dead. The sea recognised Him as its Lord, because it afforded a firm pathway to His Feet over its waters, so that the apostles took Him to be a spectre (Matt. xiv. 25, 26). Hell also recognised Him, "because He hath broken its gates of brass and burst its iron bars" (Ps. cvi. 16), and besides hath bound therein that implacable murderer who is called "the devil and Satan" (Apoc. xx. 2). Assuredly, He Who raised the dead,

cleansed lepers, gave sight to the blind, and the free use of their limbs to the lame, and cured all manner of diseases, must have been Lord of all, and the hand which repaired the broken creatures must have been the same which originally fashioned them. Thus also, He Who predicted that a fish should be found with a stater in its mouth (Matt. xvii. 26), showed that He was Lord of the sea, and of every living thing that moves in its waters. Furthermore, it is manifest that He Who dragged the aerial powers in His triumphal train "fastening them to the cross" (Col. ii. 14, 15), has received authority over the infernal regions. For it is He of Whom it is written that "He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil" (Acts x. 38); it is He Who "stood in a plain place" (Luke vi. 17) in order to instruct the crowds; Who "stood before the governor" (Matt. xxvii. 11) in order to endure stripes; Who during the whole time in which "He was seen upon earth and conversed with men" (Bar. iii. 38) lived in the midst of many labours, whilst "He wrought salvation in the midst of the earth" (Ps. lxxiii. 12).

It only remains for Thee, now, O Lord Jesus, to perfect that seamless garment of Thine (John xix. 23) and to give its final increase to our faith, by ascending in the sight of Thy apostles (Acts i. 9) through the midst of the air, as the Lord of the air, and "above all the heavens." From this it will be evident that Thou art "Lord of all things" (2 Mac. xiv. 35), that Thou fillest "all in all" (1 Cor. xii. 6); and thereafter it will certainly be due to Thee that "in Thy name every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue

should confess" that Thou art in the glory and at the right hand of the Father (Phil. ii. 10-11). My brethren, "at (this) right hand are delights even to the end" (Ps. xv. 11), and therefore the Apostle exhorts us to "seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God" (Col. iii. 1): because there undoubtedly we shall find our treasure, Jesus Christ, "in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. ii. 3), in Whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead corporally" (ibid. 9).

But, my brethren, how great fear and sorrow must we not suppose to have invaded the hearts of the apostles when they saw the Lord Jesus taken from them, and rising through the air, not ascending by means of ladders, nor drawn aloft with ropes, nor upborne by angelic hands—although troops of angels surrounded Him as an escort of honour—but mounting "in the greatness of His strength" (Is. lxiii. 1)! Then was fulfilled the word which He spoke to them, "Whither I go, you cannot come" (John xiii. 33). They would have followed Him inseparably whithersoever He went on the earth; they would have cast themselves into the sea—as Peter did on one occasion—to perish with Him in its waters: but on this aerial path they could not follow Him, "for the corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth upon many things" (Wisdom ix. 15). Great, accordingly, must have been their grief, when they beheld Him, for Whose sake they had renounced all things, withdrawn from their presence and from their sight, for "the children of the Bridegroom" could not but mourn when they saw the Bridegroom "taken away from them" (Matt. ix. 15).

And their fear also was great, because they were left like orphans (John xiv. 18) in the midst of the Jews, and had not as yet been "endued with power from on high" (Luke xxiv. 49). So "whilst He blessed them, He departed from them, and was carried up to heaven" (ibid. 51), that most merciful Heart of His melting doubtless with pity for His sorrowing disciples and His poor little Church—although He was but going to prepare a place for them (John xiv. 3) and because it was expedient for them that He should withdraw from them His bodily presence (John xvi. 7). Oh, how blissful, how glorious was that procession in which even the apostles were not yet accounted worthy to take part, when Christ the Lord, followed by exultant throngs of angelic spirits and the sanctified souls of men, ascended to the Father, to take His seat at His right hand! Now truly He has "filled all things." For He has been born amongst men, He has "conversed with men," He has endured suffering and death from men and for men, He has arisen from the dead, He has ascended into heaven, He is seated at the right hand of God. I now recognise that "coat without seam, woven from the top throughout" (John xix. 23) which terminated to-day in the celestial enthronement, whereby our Lord Jesus Christ has filled all things and been filled Himself with the fulness of glory.

But, my brethren, what part have I in this joyous festivity? O my Lord Jesus, who will console me for that I saw Thee not when Thou wert hanging on the cross, livid with stripes, and pale with the pallor of death? for that I did not weep for Thee crucified, or honour Thee dead, washing with my tears the wounds in Thy Body? And wherefore didst

Thou leave me without a word of farewell when, "beautiful in Thy robe" (Is. lxiii. 1), as the immortal King of glory, Thou didst mount aloft unto the highest heavens? Verily "my soul (would have) refused to be comforted" (Ps. lxxvi. 3), had not the angels "with the voice of exultation" (Ps. xli. 5) made haste to console me, saying, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus, Who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen Him going into heaven" (Acts i. 11). So, I am assured, shall He come again. And shall He then come to seek us with so unique and universal a procession, when He descends to judge the living and the dead, preceded by all the angels and followed by all men? Yes, He shall come, most assuredly, and as He has ascended to-day, not in the way in which He descended before. For He came in humility the first time in order to save our souls, but shall come in majesty hereafter to raise up our bodies and to "make them like to the Body of His glory" (Phil. iii. 21); so that He seems to bestow upon our "less honourable part a more abundant honour" (1 Cor. xii. 23). For then He shall be seen "with great power and majesty" (Luke xxi. 27) Who was concealed before in the weakness of the flesh. And I, even "I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not near" (Num. xxiv. 17); and this second glorification shall manifestly excel the former in the greatness of the glory it imparts.

In the meantime, Christ as "the Sheaf of our first-fruits" (Lev. xxiii. 15) has been offered; He has been taken up to the Father's right hand, and "He now appeareth in the presence of God for us" (Heb. ix. 24). But He is seated there, having mercy in His right

hand, and justice in His left ; mercy exceeding great, and justice also exceeding great. He is there, I say, holding most firmly in His right hand water and in His left hand fire (Ecclus. xv. 17). And in truth, "according to the height of the heavens above the earth, He hath strengthened His mercy towards them that fear Him" (Ps. cii. 11), so that they feel the piled up treasures of His compassions to be more than sufficient to fill the whole space between heaven and earth. For the merciful designs of God regarding them remain immovably fixed : as the Psalmist sings, "The mercy of the Lord is from eternity and unto eternity upon them that fear Him" (ibid. 17), from eternity, according to predestination ; unto eternity, according to glorification. Similarly with regard to the reprobate, He is "terrible in His counsels over the sons of men" (Ps. lxv. 5). On both sides His eternal decree stands immutably firm "in them that are saved and in them that perish" (2 Cor. ii. 15).* My brethren, who knows whether the names of all you that are now listening to me are written in heaven (Luke x. 18) and inscribed in the book of predestination ? It seems to me indeed that I can discern some signs of your calling and justification in the lowliness of your way of life. But oh ! what joy would fill my soul if only I had assurance of this ! As the case is, however, "man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred" (Eccles. ix. 1).

Therefore, dearest brethren, persevere in the rule of life you have adopted, so that through humility you may attain to glory : for this is the way, and there

* For St. Bernard's teaching with regard to predestination, cf. vol. i. p. 107 ; also *Sermons on the Canticle of Canticles*, vol. i. p. 249, note (Mount Melleray Translation)

is none other. Whosoever travels by a different road rather falls down than mounts up, because it is humility alone that exalts, it is humility alone that leads us to life. Christ Himself, seeing that in His Divine Nature He had no capacity for either growth or elevation—because beyond God is nothing—found, by descending a way of increase, when, namely, He came to be made flesh, to suffer, and to die, lest we should have to endure an everlasting death. "For which cause God also hath exalted Him" (Phil. ii. 9), because He has arisen from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the Father's right hand. To each one of you I say, "Go, and do thou in like manner" (Luke x. 37). For thou also wilt not be able to ascend unless thou hast first descended: so it has been decreed and fixed by eternal law, "Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke xiv. 11). Oh, the perversity, oh, the waywardness of the children of Adam! For whereas to descend is most easy, and to ascend most difficult, they require little persuasion to ascend, and can hardly ever be induced to descend, being always ready to mount up to the honours and dignities of ecclesiastical rank—honours and dignities the burden whereof even the strong angels might hesitate to shoulder. But only very few are found to follow Thy footsteps, Lord Jesus; only very few are found who either suffer themselves to be drawn or are willing to be led "in the way of Thy commandments" (Ps. cxviii. 32). For some are drawn, those, namely, who exclaim with the Spouse, "Draw me: we will run after Thee" (Cant. i. 3); and some are led, such as can boast, "The King hath brought me into His store-rooms" (ibid.); and some

also are rapt, as the Apostle was, "rapt even to the third heaven" (2 Cor. xii. 2). Blessed are they who belong to the first class, because they "possess their souls in patience" (Luke xxi. 19); more blessed they who belong to the second class, because "with their will they give praise to Him" (Ps. xxvii. 7); but most blessed of all they of the third, who, having buried, so to speak, their own power of free choice in the profound depths of the divine mercy,* are rapt in fervour of spirit up into "the riches of His glory" (Ephes. iii. 16), not knowing whether they are "in the body or out of the body" (2 Cor. xii. 2), conscious of nothing save that they have been rapt. Happy the man who follows Thee everywhere, Lord Jesus, instead of that apostate spirit, who wished to ascend immediately after his creation, and was, in consequence, struck down with the full force of God's right arm. "But we are Thy people and the sheep of Thy pasture" (Ps. lxxviii. 13), and will follow Thee through Thee to Thyself. For Thou art "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John xiv. 6), the Way by Thy example, the Truth in Thy promises, and the Life in reward. "Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we have believed and have known that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (John vi. 69, 70), and art Thyself over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

* That is to say, those who by the divine mercy have attained to this third and highest degree are so replenished with grace and feel its attractions so powerful that they "run in the way of the commandments" (Ps. cxviii. 32) almost as easily as if their free will had been entirely absorbed, and losing sight of self and its interests altogether, seek naught save the glory of God. Cf. the Saint's treatise, "De diligendo Deo," ix.-x. (Translator).

THIRD SERMON FOR THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION.

On the Enlightenment of the Intellect by Christ and the Purification of the Will by the Holy Spirit.

"It is expedient to you that I go, for if I go not the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go I will send Him to you." —John xvi. 7.

To-day, my brethren, the Lord of heaven has mounted up, by His own divine power, to the highest height of heaven; and casting off, as if it were a cloud, the weakness of the flesh, has put on the garments of His glory (Is. lii. 1). The Sun of Justice has ascended at His rising, increasing in warmth and power; His rays are multiplied and far-flung on the earth, "and there is no one that can hide himself from His heat" (Ps. xviii. 7). The Wisdom of God has returned to Wisdom's home, whose inmates all both understand and seek the good (Ps. xiii. 2), being most perspicacious in mind and most ready in will to understand and "to hearken to the voice of His orders" (Ps. cii. 20). As for us, we still abide in this lower region, where malice abounds and there is but little wisdom, "for the corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the sense (*sensum*) that museth upon many things" (Wisdom ix. 15). In my opinion, the word "sense" in this passage must be understood as signifying the intellect, which is then in truth "pressed down" when it "museth upon

many things," that is to say, when it does not concentrate itself wholly on that one and unique consideration which concerns the "city wherein all are united together" (Ps. cxxi. 3). Such an intellect must of necessity be oppressed and distracted by a multitude of objects in many and various ways. It seems to me also that by "soul" we must here understand the affections of the soul, which, owing to the corruption of the body by sin, have become inordinate and are converted into blind passions, so that they cannot be restrained, much less reformed, until the will learns to love the One and to strive after the One.

Accordingly, there are two things within us which need to be purified, our intellect, namely, and our will: our intellect that it may know as it ought to know, our will that it may love as it ought to love. Happy and truly blessed are the two men, Elias and Enoch, who have been separated from all the objects and occasions capable of seducing their intellect and will; for living to God alone, they know nothing except God, and desire nothing except God. Hence we read of Enoch that "he was taken away lest wickedness should alter his understanding or deceit beguile his soul" (Wisdom iv. 11). But our intellect has been clouded, not to say darkened; and our will has been stained, yea, covered with defilement. Christ, however, is now enlightening the one, and the Holy Spirit purifying the other. For the Son of God came to us and wrought such and so many wonders in the world as are well calculated to draw away our minds from earthly things: to the end that we may always think, and feel we can never think enough, of the marvellous

things He has done for us. Truly He has left us a most spacious field for the activity of our understanding—an exceedingly deep torrent of thoughts, which, according to the Prophet (Ezech. xlvii. 5), cannot be passed over. For who can conceive worthy thoughts of these things: how the Lord of the universe prevented us, visited us, assisted us; how that Sovereign Majesty willed to die that we might live, willed to serve that we might reign, willed to suffer exile that we might be brought home, willed to stoop to the meanest services that He might set us over all the works of His hands (Ps. viii. 7)?

The Lord of the apostles revealed Himself to the apostles in such a manner that it could be no longer said of them that they saw "the invisible things of God, being understood by the things that are made" (Rom. i. 20), for they saw Him face to face Who made all things both visible and invisible. But inasmuch as the disciples were carnal, whilst God is a Spirit, and spirit and flesh have little in common, He used the medium of a body to temper His brightness to their eyes, so that through a living veil of flesh they might see the Word in the flesh, the Sun of Justice in a cloud, the Light of the world in an earthen vessel, the Candle in a lantern. For "a Spirit before our face is Christ the Lord, to Whom we said: under Thy shadow we shall live among the gentiles," (Lament. iv. 20). "Under Thy shadow," it is said, "we shall live among the gentiles," not among the angels, for when we are amongst them our eyes shall be perfectly pure, so that we shall be able to see the Light in Its perfect purity. Hence also it was that the power of the Most High overshadowed Mary (Luke i. 35), lest otherwise

even her eagle eye should be dazzled and oppressed by the intolerable splendour and brightness of Divinity. But the reason why the Lord showed Himself in the flesh to His disciples was this: in order to withdraw their thoughts and affections gradually from earthly things, attaching them at first to His own sacred Flesh (by Which, as they perceived, He spoke and wrought so many wonders), so that thence He might lift them up to a purely spiritual love of Himself: for "God is a Spirit, and they that adore Him must adore Him in spirit and in truth" (John iv. 24).* Did He not, think you, enlighten their intellect when "He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures" (Luke xxiv. 45) making known to them that "Christ ought to have suffered these things and so to enter into His glory" (ibid. 26)?

The disciples, however, being so tenderly attached to His most holy Humanity, could not bear to hear a word about His departure from them, could not bear to hear Him speak of leaving them, who for His sake had left all things (Matt. xix. 27). Wherefore this?

* The same doctrine is found more clearly expressed in the twentieth sermon on the Canticle of Canticles, where the holy Preacher says, "To my mind, the principal reason (*praecipuam causam*) why the invisible God willed to show Himself in visible flesh and as a man to converse amongst men, was this: that He might draw all the feelings of carnal souls (who knew how to love nothing save in a carnal way) first to a salutary love of His own Flesh, whence they could be gradually exalted to a more spiritual affection." From this it is hardly allowable to infer that St. Bernard held the view defended later by Albert the Great, Scotus, Suarez, St. Francis of Sales, etc., to wit, that Christ would have become man even though Adam had never fallen. For it might be objected that the very need for the purification of our affections is due to original sin. Besides, in the Treatise against Abelard, the Saint seems to hold the opposite opinion with Saints Augustine and Thomas.—(Translator.)

Because although their intellect had been enlightened, their will was not as yet purified. Hence their gracious Master kindly and sweetly consoles them, saying, "Because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart. But I tell you the truth: it is expedient to you that I go, for if I go not the Paraclete will not come to you" (John xvi. 6, 7). How is it, my brethren, that so long as Christ abode on earth the Paraclete could not come to them? Is it that the Holy Spirit abhorred the companionship of that Flesh Which by Him and through Him was conceived in and born of the Virgin Mother? God forbid that we should think so! No, He tarried because the purpose of His coming was in order to point out to us the way in which we should walk, and to impress upon us the form wherewith we should be sealed.* For the Lord Jesus, having mounted into heaven amidst the tears and lamentations of the disciples, sent down upon them the Holy Spirit, Who purified or rather transformed their affection, that is to say, their will, in such sort that they who before would have retained their dear Master amongst them, were now better pleased He had ascended to the Father. Thus was fulfilled what He had Himself predicted, "You shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy" (John xvi. 20). In this way, then, their intellect was first enlightened by Christ and their will afterwards purified by the Holy Spirit, so that they might not only know the good, but also will it. And this alone is perfect religion, or shall I say, religious perfection?

* That is to say, it was expedient that the Holy Ghost should not descend until Christ's visible presence had been withdrawn, because He came to teach us how to "walk by faith and not by sight" (2 Cor. v. 7). (Translator.)

There occurs to me now that request of the holy Prophet Eliseus, how, when told by Elias that at the time of his (Elias's) departure or ascension he might ask whatever he pleased, he made answer and said, "I beseech thee that in me may be thy double spirit." To this the other replied, "Thou hast asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, thou shalt have what thou hast asked; but if thou see me not, thou shalt not have it" (4 Kings ii. 9, 10). Does it not seem to you, my brethren, that Elias, in his taking up, was a figure of the Lord's ascension, and that Eliseus represented the little band of disciples, afflicted and disconsolate at the departure of Christ? For just as Eliseus refused on any account to part from Elias, so neither could the disciples be separated from the visible presence of Christ. Scarcely did He succeed at last in convincing them that "without faith it is impossible to please God" * (Heb. xi. 6). What, therefore, is this double spirit prayed for, but the enlightenment of the intellect and the purification of the will? "A hard thing," no doubt, and not often do we find on earth one who has merited to receive it. "Nevertheless, if thou see Me when I am taken from thee, thou shalt have what thou hast asked." Thy disciples, then, Lord Jesus, were, or need have been at no loss when, "while they looked on," Thou wast raised up into heaven, "mounting in the greatness of Thy strength" (Is. lxiii. 1), and followed by their yearning eyes. Or perhaps we had better understand

* The Saint insinuates that there would be no room for the exercise of faith had Christ remained visibly upon earth with His glorified Humanity: "Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed" (John xx. 29). Cf. St. Thomas, III. q. lvii. a. 1.—(Translator.)

the "double spirit" of the promise which the Saviour made to His disciples, when He said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, he that believeth in Me, the works that I do he also shall do, and greater than these shall he do" (John xiv. 12). And in point of fact did not Peter perform greater wonders than Christ—although it was by the power of Christ—since of him it is said that "they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that, when Peter came, his shadow at least might overshadow any of them and they might be delivered from their infirmities" (Acts v. 15)? But we nowhere read of any infirmities having been cured by the shadow of the Lord.

My brethren, I have no doubt that the understanding of every one of you who are now listening to me, has been sufficiently enlightened; but I have very good grounds for suspecting that not all your wills have been correspondingly purified. You all know what is the good you ought to strive after; you know the way in which you should walk and how you should advance therein. But not in all is found the same good will. For there are some who, as regards all the exercises of our rule of life, do not simply walk, but run, yea, rather fly to them in the alacrity of their zeal, finding the long vigils short, and the coarse food sweet, and the poor clothes beautiful, and the hard toil not only supportable but actually pleasant. There are others less fervent, who with a cold heart and a reluctant will can scarcely be forced by shame or by the fear of hell-fire to the performance of their religious duties. Others again there are who cannot be moved even by fear or shame: they have a brazen forehead

and will not blush (Jer. iii. 3). There are many amongst us, I say, who eat the same bread with us, who sleep under the same roof with us, who sing psalms in the same choir with us, and toil in the same field with us, and whose lot is most unhappy and pitiful, because, whilst participating with us in all our tribulation, they have no part in our consolation. Shall we suppose "the hand of the Lord is shortened" (Is. lix. 1) so that He cannot communicate His gifts to all—He Who "openeth His hand and filleth with blessing every living creature" (Ps. cxliv. 16)? God forbid! But what, then, is the explanation of the mystery? The explanation is this, that such religious do not see Christ when He is taken away from them. That is to say, they do not consider how He has left them orphans, how they are but "sojourners and strangers" (1 Par. xxix. 15) upon the earth, how they are still confined in the horrid prison of a corruptible body and are not with Christ (2 Cor. v. 6). But if monks of this kind continue long—with such dispositions—to endure the rigours of the monastic life, they will either end by being oppressed and sinking beneath the burden, or they will find themselves in a very hell upon earth, since they can never rejoice as they ought in the light of God's mercies, or in that liberty of spirit which alone makes the yoke sweet and the burden light (Matt. xi. 30).

Now the source of this most dangerous tepidity will be found in an affection or will that is not yet purified: these persons have knowledge of the good, but love not the same, "being mightily drawn away and allured by their own concupiscence" (James i. 14). For they delight in those little earthly consolations which flatter the flesh, whether they be words, or signs, or deeds, or

whatever else; and although they sometimes interrupt the evil habit, they refuse to break it off altogether. Hence it is that their affections are so rarely directed to God. Here also we have the reason why their compunction is so inconstant, lasting scarce an hour, nay, scarce a moment. Now, obviously, the soul which is subject to such distractions cannot be replenished with divine grace; this is infused in greater or less degree according to the measure in which she rids herself of those. Or if you prefer to have it put in this way: there can never be any intermingling of divine with human consolations, because the oil can only descend so far as it finds the vessel empty (4 Kings iv. 6), and men will put new wine into none but new bottles so that bothmay be preserved (Mark ii. 22). Moreover, there can be no fellowship between the Spirit and the flesh, between fire and tepidity, particularly as the Lord is wont to vomit what is lukewarm out of His mouth (Apoc. iii. 16).

But, my brother, if the apostles, because of their attachment to the Flesh of the Lord (Which was singularly holy as being the Flesh of the Holy of holies) could not be filled with the Holy Ghost until that Flesh had been withdrawn from them: how canst thou think it possible for thee to receive that Spirit of infinite purity whilst thou art still wedded and devoted to thine own flesh, corrupt as it is, and full of all defilement; whilst thou still makest no endeavour to renounce absolutely these carnal consolations? Now, it is true that when thou beginnest to mortify thyself thus, sorrow shall fill thy heart; but if thou perseverest, thy "sorrow shall be turned into joy" (John xvi. 20). For then thy intellect shall be enlightened and thy will

renewed: or rather thy will shall be newly created, so that what before appeared difficult, nay, impossible, thou shalt accomplish now with the greatest pleasure and avidity.* "Thou shalt send forth Thy Spirit," sings the Psalmist, "and they shall be created; and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth" (Ps. ciii. 30) Just as the outer man is recognised by his face, so is the inner man made known by the will. By the sending forth of the Spirit, therefore, the face of the earth is created and renewed, that is to say, the will that was earthly is changed and made heavenly, ready to obey with all promptitude every injunction of authority. Happy they that are such, who not only do not feel oppressed by the hardships of penance, but, on the contrary, experience therein a joyous expansion of heart. But as for those lukewarm religious of whom I was speaking a while ago, it is with reference to them that God pronounced the terrible words, "My Spirit shall not remain in man for ever, because he is flesh" (Gen. vi. 3), that is, because he has become carnal, and all that was spirit in him is in a manner changed into flesh.

It is to-day, my dearest brethren, that the Bridegroom has been taken away from us, not without much sorrow of heart on our side. Nevertheless, He is only gone that He may send us the Spirit of truth. Let us, therefore, pray with all earnestness that that Divine Spirit may find or rather may render us worthy

* "This path of (penance) is indeed narrow in the beginning; but when thou shalt have advanced therein and grown strong in faith, thy heart shall be enlarged, and thou shalt run in the way of God's commandments with that unspeakable delight which charity imparts to the soul."—Preface to the Holy Rule of St. Benedict (Mount Melleray Translation).

of His visitation and may fill the whole house where we are now sitting (Acts ii. 2), so that His grace shall "teach us of all things" (1 John ii. 27) and we shall not need vexation to make us understand (Is. xxviii. 19); and that having thus enlightened our intellect and purified our will, He may vouchsafe to come into our hearts and to make His abode with us (John xiv. 23). And as the rod of Aaron, changed into a serpent, devoured all the serpents of the magicians (Exod. vii. 12), so shall the Holy Spirit, when He comes, empty our hearts of all carnal affections and delights, and infuse into them instead His own heavenly consolations, with the result that thenceforth we shall find rest in labour, joy in affliction, glory in shame. Thus we read of them whom He filled of yore how "they went forth from the presence of the council rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus" (Acts v. 41). For the Spirit of Jesus, the Good Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the "Right Spirit," the Sweet Spirit, the "Perfect Spirit" (Ps. l. 12, 14), will make broad and easy whatever appears narrow and hard in this wicked world: He will teach us to regard disgrace as a source of joy and contempt as exaltation. Let us, therefore, as the Prophet commands, "let us search our ways, and seek and return to the Lord; let us lift up our hearts with our hands to the Lord in the heavens" (Lament. iii. 40, 41), so that we may rejoice the more abundantly on the approaching solemnity of the Holy Ghost, Who will teach us all truth, as the Son of God has promised (John xvi. 13).

FOURTH SERMON FOR THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION.

On the Ascensions of Lucifer and Adam, which we must avoid, and the Six Ascensions of Christ, which we ought to imitate.

"*He That descended is the Same also That ascended above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.*"—Ephes. iv. 10.

Brethren, if we observed the feasts of Christmas and Easter with all due devotion, not less devoutly ought we to keep to-day's festival in honour of the Ascension. For this falls short in no respect of those other solemnities, but is rather their crown and consummation. Rightly, no doubt, are we accustomed to celebrate with rejoicing and exultation that day whereon the divine, super-celestial Sun, the Sun of justice, exhibited Himself to our gaze, tempering to our weakness, with a cloud of flesh and a screen of mortality, His overpowering splendours and "light inaccessible" (1 Tim. vi. 16). Good reason have we also for great joy and gladness on the day when that was fulfilled which He predicted by His Prophet, "Thou hast cut My sack-cloth and hast encompassed Me with gladness" (Ps. xxix. 12), when, having put off, not the substance of His Humanity, but the oldness, the mortality, the misery, and the lowliness thereof, He consecrated in Himself the first-fruits of our resurrection. But after all, what part have I in such celestial festivities, if I must still live my own life altogether upon earth? And who would be so presumptuous as even to desire to ascend to heaven,

had not He first ascended thither whence He descended before? (John iii. 13). Now I assure you, dearest brethren, hardly more tolerable than hell itself would this life of exile appear to me "except the Lord of hosts had left us a seed" (Is. i. 9) of confidence and expectation, when He was raised into the clouds and gave hope to the hearts of His faithful. For He said to them, "If I go not the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go I will send Him to you" (John xvi. 7). Who is this Paraclete? The Same, doubtless, by Whom "the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts" (Rom. v. 5), so that now "hope confoundeth not" (ibid.). The Paraclete is He by Whom "our conversation is in heaven" (Phil. iii. 20), and the "Power from on high" (Luke xxiv. 49) by Whom we are enabled to lift up our hearts (Preface of the Mass). "I go," said the Saviour again, "to prepare a place for you. And if I shall go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am there you also may be" (John xiv. 2, 3), for "wheresoever the body shall be, there shall the eagles also be gathered together" (Matt. xxiv. 28). Do you not now recognise how the feast which we are observing to-day gives their consummation to all other solemnities, exhibits their fruit, and enhances their grace?

If everything else belonging to Him Who was born for us and given to us (Is. ix. 6) has been for our sakes and conduces to our profit, the same is equally true of His Ascension. In the course of our own lives, my brethren, there are many things which, so far as we are concerned, we seem to do by chance, and many more by necessity. But with regard to Christ, Who is the Power

and the Wisdom of God (1 Cor. i. 24), there can be no question of either necessity or chance. For what necessity could constrain the Power of God? Or how could the Wisdom of God act at random? Be assured, consequently, that everything He said, everything He did, everything He suffered, was all the result of deliberate design, was all full of mysterious significance, all pregnant with the remedies of salvation. Knowing this to be the case, whenever a reason for something appertaining to Christ occurs to me, you ought not to receive it as a pure fancy of my own, but as the possible purpose of that which you were already convinced must have some purpose. For just as he who is engaged in writing disposes everything according to a definite plan, so have all the works of God been governed by a conscious design, and those most particularly which were wrought by the Divine Majesty present amongst us in the flesh. But alas for the scantiness of our knowledge! Alas for the poverty of our science, who know only in part (1 Cor. xiii. 9) and only in a very limited part! Hardly do we receive a ray or two from that excess of light, from that luminous candle set upon its candlestick (Matt. v. 15). Surely, then, in proportion to the little light we severally receive the greater ought to be our fidelity in communicating that little to each other. As for myself, dearest brethren, I have neither the wish nor the right to withhold from you whatever the Lord has vouchsafed to make known to me unto your edification, with regard to the mystery of His Ascension, or rather of His ascensions: especially as it is the prerogative of spiritual gifts that they are not lessened by participation. What I am going to speak of now will perhaps be nothing

strange to some of you to whom similar lights may have been imparted. Nevertheless, I feel it my duty to tell you what I have received, for the sake of such as have not been so enlightened, either because they have been engrossed in the contemplation of truths more sublime, or occupied with the care of other things, or on account of the weakness of their understanding.

"He That descended is the Same also That ascended" (Ephes. iv. 10). These, my brethren, are the words of the Apostle. But it is my belief that this very descent of Christ was itself an ascension. For so it behoved Him to descend in order to teach us how we must ascend. We are all of us in truth very eager to mount, we all desire elevation. For we are creatures of a noble nature, distinguished from the rest by the greatness of our soul, and consequently we feel a natural impulse to seek what is sublime. But woe to us if we wish to follow the example of him who said, "I will sit in the mountain of the covenant, in the sides of the north" (Is. xiv. 13)! "In the sides of the north"? Ah, miserable wretch! Too cold is that region: we will not follow thee thither. Thou art possessed with the passion for power, thou presumest to mount to the height of dominion. Yet how many mortals even to this day are found to walk in thy footsteps, which lead only to disgrace and unhappiness! Nay, rather, how few can we find anywhere not enslaved to the love of dominion! Hence it is that "they that have power over them are called beneficent" (Luke xxii. 25); hence it is that "the sinner is praised in the desires of his soul" (Ps. x. 3—juxta Heb.). For all flatter the powerful, all envy the great. But whom are you following, O miserable mortals, whom are you following? Saw you not

"Satan like lightning falling from heaven" (Luke x. 18)? Is not this ambition of power the very mountain on which he ascended as an angel and was in a moment changed into a demon? And take particular notice of this fact, that after his fall, although possessed with the wicked purpose—inspired by his insupportable jealousy—of destroying man, he nevertheless did not dare to invite him to ascend that mountain whereon it was known to Adam that he had himself come to irreparable ruin as the result of his vain self-exaltation.

The crafty enemy, however, was not at a loss for a means of seducing our first parents. He showed them a second mountain like unto the first. "You shall be as gods," he said to them, "knowing good and evil" (Gen. iii. 5). Equally ruinous was this ascent, or, as I should rather call it, this descent from Jerusalem to Jericho (Luke x. 30). A most dangerous mountain is the knowledge which inflates the mind (1 Cor. viii. 1), up which, nevertheless, you may see creeping, even at this day, multitudes of the children of Adam, with as great eagerness as if they did not know how much their primogenitor lowered himself by that ascent, yea, how frightful a fall he sustained, and how with him was flung down and gravely injured the whole of his posterity! Not yet healed, my brethren, are the wounds inflicted on us in the ascent of that mountain, whilst we possessed as yet only a virtual existence in our first father: and shall we again endeavour to mount, this time in our proper person, so that "the last error shall be worse than the first" (Matt. xxvii. 64)? What means this insatiable desire for knowing in the hearts of miserable mortals? "O ye sons of men, how long will you be dull of heart? Why do you love vanity

and seek after lying ? " (Ps. iv. 3). Are you not aware that " God hath chosen the foolish things of the world that He may confound the wise, and hath chosen the weak things of the world that He may confound the strong " (1 Cor. i. 27) ? But it seems that nothing can cure us of our infatuation, neither the fear of God Who threatens us and declares that He " will destroy the wisdom of the wise and will reject the prudence of the prudent " (ibid. 19), nor the example of our first parents, nor even our own reason and our experience of the bitter necessity to which we are doomed by this senseless passion for knowledge.

I have now, my brethren, pointed out to you another mountain, a mountain which ought rather to be shunned than ascended. It is the same that was climbed by them who wished to " be as God, knowing good and evil " (Gen. iii. 5) ; the same which their children, to the present hour, are constantly piling and heaving up, regarding nothing as too mean to be used for exalting the mountain of human science. Thus, you may see different men engaged in the pursuit of the different branches of knowledge, some applying themselves to literature, others to the study of public affairs, this one absorbed in some pleasing vanity which displeases God, that one cultivating some of the servile arts, and all animated with so much zeal that no labour is regarded provided only they can have the pleasure of being reputed wiser than their fellows. So do they build their Babel (Gen. xi.), so do they expect to make themselves like to God, so do they strive after things which cannot profit them, neglecting such as are expedient. O ye sons of Adam, what have you to do with these mountains, which are so difficult of ascent and so full

of deadly peril? Or wherefore do you so shun that other mountain whose ascent is as easy as it is profitable? The passion for power deprived the angels of their angelic bliss; and the passion for knowledge deprived man of the glory of his immortality. Let a person attempt to ascend the mountain of power: how many rivals shall he not have! how many opponents! what obstacles to surmount! what difficulties in the way! And even should he succeed at last in obtaining what he covets, he is warned by Holy Scripture that "the mighty shall be mightily tormented" (Wisdom vi. 7)—to say nothing of the present anxieties and solicitudes engendered by the possession of power. Another man is desirous of the knowledge which "puffeth up" (1 Cor. viii. 1). Oh, what labour will he not have to undergo! what bitterness and anguish of mind to endure! And nevertheless it can be said to him, "Strive as thou mayest, thou shalt never reach thy goal." No, such a man's "eye abideth in bitterness" (Job xvii. 2) so long as he beholds anyone whom he judges to be or to be reputed by others superior in knowledge to himself. But even should he succeed in acquiring great wisdom, what shall his profit be? "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise," saith the Lord, "and the prudence of the prudent I will reject."

I have now, I think, said enough to show you how necessary it is for us to avoid both the mountain of power and the mountain of knowledge, if we have no wish to experience in ourselves either the irreparable ruin of the angels or the fall of the first man. "Ye mountains of Gelboe, let neither dew nor rain come upon ye" (2 Kings i. 21): so have these mountains been cursed

by the Prophet. What, then, are we to do? To ascend as Lucifer or as Adam is not expedient for us and, nevertheless, we burn with the desire to ascend. Who will show us how we can make a salutary ascension? Who but He of Whom it is written, "He That descended is the Same also That ascended"? So it was needful for us to learn from Him the right way of ascending, lest otherwise we should follow the example or the counsel of the infernal guide, or rather seducer. The Most High, therefore, descended, because whither to ascend He found not; and by His descent He has marked out and consecrated for us a way of ascending both pleasant and profitable. He descended from the mountain of power by clothing Himself with the weakness of the flesh; He descended also from the mountain of wisdom, because "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. i. 21). For what can seem weaker than the tender little Body and Members of a newly-born Child? And where can be found less evidence of wisdom than in an Infant That appears to know nothing beyond Its Mother's breast? Who can be considered more impotent than One Whose Limbs are all fastened with nails to the cross, and Whose Flesh is so cruelly torn with stripes that all His Bones can be numbered (Ps. xxi. 17, 18)? Or who less wise than One Who "delivered His Soul unto death" (Is. liii. 12) and "did pay that which He took not away" (Ps. lxviii. 5)? You see, brethren, how much He descended, how utterly He emptied Himself of His power, how utterly of His wisdom. Nevertheless, He could not otherwise than by such descents have ascended so high upon the mountain of goodness, nor have given us such evident proofs of His love. Nor

is it matter for wonder that Christ ascended by descending, seeing that both Lucifer and Adam descended by ascending. And it seems to me that when the Psalmist inquired, "Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord, or who shall stand in His holy place?" (Ps. xxiii. 3) he was seeking for some one capable of ascending this mountain of goodness and love. Perhaps it was to the same mountain the Prophet Isaias also referred, when, seeing how men were falling down through the very desire of ascending, he cried out to them, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord" (Is. ii. 3). Consider again if holy David is not manifestly rebuking those who ascended the mountains of knowledge and power, and proclaiming the richness of this last-mentioned mountain, where he says, "The mountain of God is a fat mountain; a curdled mountain, a fat mountain. Why suspect ye curdled mountains?' (Ps. lxvii. 16, 17). This, consequently, is "the mountain of the house of the Lord, prepared on the top of mountains" (Is. ii. 2), of those mountains, I mean, upon which the Bride beheld her Bridegroom leaping, when she exclaimed, "Behold He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills" (Cant. ii. 8). For He was then pointing out the way to one who did not know it, He was, as it were, conducting a little one, leading a child by the hand. Hence He proceeded in this gradual way, step by step, "from virtue to virtue," as from mountain to mountain, so that "the God of gods might be seen in Sion" (Ps. lxxxiii. 8). For His "justice is as the mountains of God" (Ps. xxv. 7).

But let us now, if you think well of it, consider more particularly those leapings of the Bridegroom, wherewith He "hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way"

(Ps. xviii. 6), Whose "going out is from the height of heaven and His circuit—by certain stages—even to the height thereof" (ibid. 7). In the first place, picture to yourselves that high mountain which He ascended with Peter, James, and John, and on which "He was transfigured before them," so that "His Face did shine as the sun, and His garments became white as snow" (Matt. xvii. 1, 2). This, my brethren, is the glory of the general resurrection which we are now contemplating on the hill of hope. For wherefore should Christ ascend that mountain to be transfigured there, unless because He wished to admonish us to ascend in thought to that "future glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. viii. 18)? Happy the man "the meditation of whose heart is always in Thy sight, O Lord" (Ps. xviii. 15), who keeps revolving in his soul by assiduous thought those "delights at Thy right hand even to the end" (Ps. xv. 11)! For what can ever seem burdensome to him who bears constantly in mind "that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come" (Rom. viii. 18)? And what can he desire in this wicked world whose eye is for ever contemplating "the good things of the Lord in the land of the living" (Ps. xxvi. 13), for ever fixed on the everlasting rewards? "My heart hath said to Thee," so sang the Prophet, addressing God, "my face hath sought Thee: Thy face, O Lord, will I still seek" (ibid. 8). Oh, who will grant me that I may see you all ascending that mountain and standing on its summit, looking forward to the happiness reserved for you by the Lord!

I beseech you, brethren, to have patience with me if I tarry a little longer upon this mountain of hope,

because I shall thus be able to traverse the others more quickly. Who indeed would not be detained on this mountain by the words which St. Peter spoke upon it and of it, "Lord, it is good for us to be here" (Matt. xvii. 4)? For what is so good for a man as that "his soul shall dwell in good things" (Ps. xxiv. 13) whilst that is as yet impossible to his body? Nay, what else can be considered good for him at all? As for me, I think it is only one who had "entered into the place of the wonderful tabernacle, even to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, the noise of one feasting" (Ps. xli. 5)—it is only such a one, as it seems to me, that could have said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here." Which of yourselves, my brethren, whilst reflecting in his heart on the immortal life to come, on the joy, and the gladness, and the bliss, and the glory of the children of God: which of you, I ask, whilst he revolves these thoughts in his mind does not immediately cry out, from the abundance of internal sweetness, "Lord, it is good for us to be here"?—not here, as is evident, in this place of our bitter exile where in his body he is still held captive, but here in this sweet and salutary meditation, where he abides in mind and heart. Oh, "who will give me wings like a dove and I will fly and be at rest!" (Ps. liv. 7). But you, O ye sons of men, ye sons of that man who "went down from Jerusalem to Jericho" (Luke x. 30), "how long will you be dull of heart" (Ps. iv. 3)? Rather "ascend to a high heart, and God shall be exalted" (Ps. lxiii. 7, 8). For that is the high mountain whereupon Christ is lifted up and transfigured. Therefore, ascend thither and you shall "know that the Lord hath made His Holy One wonderful" (Ps. iv. 4).

Do not, I entreat you, dearest brethren, do not allow your hearts to be "overcharged with the cares of this life": as for "surfeiting and drunkenness," there is not much need, thanks be to God, to warn you against such vices (Luke xxi. 34). Unburden your minds, I implore you, of the oppressive weight of worldly thoughts, that you may know how wonderful the Lord hath made His Holy One. "Lift up your hearts with your hands" (Lament. iii. 41), with the hands—so to speak—of your thoughts, that you may see the Lord in the glory of His transfiguration. Form in your hearts not only the tabernacles of the patriarchs and prophets (Matt. xvii. 4),* but likewise all the many mansions of the Father's house (John xvi. 2), and after the example of him who went around offering the sacrifice of jubilation in the tabernacles of the Lord, singing and reciting the psalm (Ps. xxvi. 6): "How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord God of Hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord" (Ps. lxxxiii. 2, 3): do you also, brethren, go around, offering as a sacrifice the sentiments of piety and devotion; visit in thought the happy abodes of the blessed, and the many mansions in the house of the Father, casting yourselves down in spirit before the throne of God and the Lamb (Apoc. iv. 10); make your supplications to each of the angelic choirs; salute in turn the companies of the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles; contemplate the shining crowns of the martyrs, woven from blossoms of purple hue; admire the troops of lily-scented virgins, and so far as the weakness of your heart will allow, drink in with an attentive mind the mellifluous strains of the new canticle (Apoc. xiv. 3). "These things I

* Cf. Sermon LXII. on the Canticle of Canticles.

remembered," sings the Psalmist, "and I poured out my soul in me." Of what things does he speak? He tells us immediately: "I shall go over into the place of the wonderful tabernacle, even to the house of God" (Ps. xli. 5). In another place he says, "I remembered God and was delighted" (Ps. lxxvi. 4). For Him Whom the apostles saw on the high mountain, the Prophet also saw, and saw, as I think, in the same manner: except that David's vision was purely spiritual and altogether independent of the senses. Not in the same way did he see Him as that other prophet who said, "We have seen Him and there is no beauty in Him nor comeliness" (Is. liii. 2). The Royal Prophet therefore must have seen Him transfigured and "beautiful above the sons of men" (Ps. xliv. 3), since he declared that the vision filled him with delight, just as the apostles exclaimed, "Lord, it is good for us to be here." And lest aught should be lacking to the similitude, as the latter are said to have fallen upon their faces (Matt. xvii. 6), so does the former confess that his "spirit swooned away" (Ps. lxxvi. 4). "Oh, how great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee!" (Ps. xxx. 20). Having ascended, therefore, this mountain of vision, and "beholding the glory of the Lord with open face" (2 Cor. iii. 18), you also, dearest brethren, will be forced to exclaim with the Spouse, "Draw us after Thee" (Cant. i. 2). For what advantage is it to know the end towards which we should direct our steps, if we are ignorant of the road which leads thither?

You must, consequently, ascend another mountain, whereon you shall hear the Lord preaching, and setting up a ladder with eight rungs, the top of

which touches heaven (Gen. xxviii. 12): "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v. 10). Now if you have climbed the first mountain by assiduous meditation on the glory of heaven, you will not be unwilling, I think, to ascend the second too by meditating day and night on the law of God (Ps. i. 2). Thus, the Royal Prophet was accustomed to meditate, not only on the eternal rewards (Ps. lxxvi. 6), but also on the divine precepts which he so ardently loved (Ps. cxviii. 47). By acting in this manner, you will deserve, like the apostles, to hear it said to you, "Whither I go, you know," on account of the first ascension, and "The way you know," because of the second (John xiv. 4). Therefore, my brethren, resolve in your heart to seek out the way of truth, lest perchance you should turn out to be of the number of those "who wandered in a wilderness, in a place without water, and found not the way of a city for their habitation" (Ps. cvi. 4). And be solicitous to ascend not only by meditation on the glory of heaven, but more particularly by living in such a manner as to merit the glory of heaven.

I find record of a third mountain also, which Christ ascended to pray (Matt. xiv. 23). You understand now, my brethren, with what reason the Spouse in the Canticle exclaims, "Behold He cometh leaping upon the mountains" (Cant. ii. 8). On the first mountain He was transfigured, that you might know to what end your course should be directed; on the second, He spoke "the words of eternal life" (John vi. 69), in order to teach you by what road you must travel to that end; and He prayed on the third, that, taught

by His example, you might strive with most earnest supplication to obtain the good will both to commence and to complete the journey. For "to him who knoweth to do good and doth it not, to him it is sin" (James iv. 17). Knowing, therefore, that the good will is only granted through prayer, when you see what you have to do, ascend the mountain of prayer for the courage and strength to perform that which you perceive is your duty. Let your prayer be urgent, let it be persevering—like that of the Lord, of Whom we read that "He passed the whole night in the prayer of God" (Luke vi. 12)—and "your Father from heaven will give the good Spirit to them that ask Him" (Luke xi. 13). And observe here how profitable must be the practice of seeking external as well as spiritual solitude at the hour of prayer, since Christ taught us this, not only by His words, when He said, "When thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret" (Matt. vi. 6), but also by His example, when "He went up into the mountain alone to pray" (Matt. xiv. 23).

Do you think now, my brethren, that I shall not be able to find for you any other example of the ascensions of the Lord? Undoubtedly, I shall. Remember, if you please, the ass upon which He is said to have mounted (Matt. xxi. 7); and I would have you to remember also His ascension of the cross, because it was necessary that upon it, likewise, the Son of man should be exalted. "And I," said He, "if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself" (John xii. 32). Now, therefore, when you have the knowledge, and "to will also is present with you, but to accomplish that which is good, you find not" (Rom. vii. 18),

because, namely, there exist in your members certain brutish and asinine motions obeying a contrary law, and striving to make you captive (ibid. 23): what are you to do? How, I ask, are you to deal with these irrational concupiscences which you find in your flesh? Again, when you are resolved to fast, the pleasure of eating solicits you; and when you would watch, drowsiness oppresses you. What shall we do with this troublesome ass? For such feelings are truly asinine, common to us with the brutes; because "man when he was in honour did not understand; he is compared to the senseless beasts, and is become like to them" (Ps. xlviii. 13). Mount, O Lord Jesus, mount upon this ass. Bridle these bestial motions, for unless they are mastered themselves, they will master us; unless they are themselves brought under and overpowered, we shall be overpowered and brought under by them. Wherefore, O my soul, thou must follow Christ the Lord in this ascent also, to the end that "thy lust may be under thee and thou mayest have dominion over it" (Gen. iv. 7). For in order to ascend into heaven, it is necessary that thou shouldst first raise thyself above thyself (Lament. iii. 28), by trampling upon those carnal desires which wage war against thee (1 Peter ii. 11).

Follow thy Lord likewise in His ascension of the cross, whereon He is exalted over the earth; so that by an elevation of mind thou mayest be lifted up, not only above thyself, but even above the whole world, to an eminence whence thou canst look down upon and despise all that the earth has to show: according to the words of the Prophet, "They shall see the earth afar off" (Is. xxxiii. 17). Let no worldly pleasures

draw thee aside; let no temporal reverses discourage thee. "God forbid that thou shouldst glory save in the cross of thy Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified to thee—so that what the world delights in thou regardest as a cross—and thou to the world" (Gal. vi. 14), by embracing with most ardent affection all that the world esteems a cross and a burden.

But now, my brethren, after the ascent of the cross, what further remains except to ascend to Him "Who is over all things, God blessed for ever" (Rom. ix. 5)? For "to be dissolved and to be with Christ is a thing by far the best" (Phil. i. 23). "Blessed is the man whose help is from Thee," says the Psalmist, speaking to the Lord, "in his heart he hath disposed to ascend by steps. . . . He shall go from virtue to virtue (until) the God of gods shall be seen in Sion" (Ps. lxxxiii. 6, 8). This is the last of our ascensions, in which all things are consummated, according to what the Apostle says, "He That descended is the Same also That ascended above all the heavens, that He might fill, that is, consummate, all things" (Ephes. iv. 10). But how shall I speak of this ascension? Whither are we to ascend, in order that where Christ is we also may be? (John xiv. 3). And what shall we find there? "The eye hath not seen, O God, besides Thee, what things Thou hast prepared for them that love Thee" (Is. lxiv. 4; 1 Cor. ii. 9). Let us long for this ascension, my dearest brethren, let us sigh for it constantly, and let us love it all the more the less we understand it.

FIFTH SERMON FOR THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION.

On the Manner in which we must follow Christ to Heaven by our Intellect and Will.

"If you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God; relish the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth."*—Col. iii. 1, 2.

To-day, my brethren, the Son of man is presented to the "Ancient of days" (Dan. vii. 9) Whose throne He is destined to share as an Equal, so that henceforth not only "shall the Bud of the Lord be in magnificence and glory," as the Prophet predicted, but also "the Fruit of the earth shall be high" (Is. iv. 2). O blessed alliance! O mystery worthy to be embraced with joy inexpressible! For the Same is the "Bud of the Lord" and the "Fruit of the earth"; the Same is the Son of God and the Fruit of Mary's womb; the Same is the Son and the Lord of David (Matt. xxii. 45), whose joy in Him is fulfilled to-day. Hence he sang of Him of old in the prophetic spirit, "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit Thou at My right hand" (Ps. cix. 1). For how is He not Lord Who is the "Bud of the Lord"? Nevertheless, the Same is also David's Son, inasmuch as He is "the high Fruit of the earth," the Fruit of that rod which "came forth out of the root of Jesse"

* This is the sense in which the Saint understands the Vulgate word "sapite," rendered "mind" by the Douay Translators. The Greek has "φρονεῖτε." Cf. *Sermons on the Canticles of Canticles*, vol. i. p. 71, vol. ii pp. 513-15 (Mount Mellery Translation); cf. also A Lapide on this verse.—(Translator.)

(Is. xi. 1). To-day, therefore, the Father has "glorified with Himself" the Same Christ Who is His own Son and the Son of man—glorified Him with the glory which He had before the world was, with Himself (John xvii. 5). To-day heaven rejoices at having restored to it the Truth That "is sprung out of the earth" (Ps. lxxxiv. 12). To-day the Bridegroom has been taken away from His children, and they are left to mourn, as He Himself has foretold (Matt. ix. 15). For "the children of the Bridegroom" could not mourn so long as they had the Bridegroom with them; but the day of parting has now come and He has been taken from them, so that henceforth their portion shall be fasting and tears. Where now, O Peter, where now are those joyous exclamations which burst from thee upon the Mount, "Lord, it is good for us to be here: If Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles" (Matt. xvii. 4)? For behold thy Lord has gone into "a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hand, that is, not of this creation" (Heb. ix. 11).

How, therefore, can it be good for us to be here any longer? Is it not rather painful, and grievous, and perilous? For here we find an abundance of malice and but very little wisdom, if any at all (Wisdom vii. 30); here everything is glutinous, and slippery, and shrouded in darkness (Ps. xxxiv. 6), and covered with the snares of sinners; here our souls are ever in danger; here our spirits are afflicted, for there is nothing under the sun but "vanity and vexation of spirit" (Eccles. i. 14). Therefore, my dearest brethren, "let us lift up our hearts with our hands to the Lord in the heavens" (Lament. iii. 41); let us endeavour to follow our ascending Lord with the feet of our faith and devotion.

The time indeed will come when, without the least difficulty or delay, "we shall be taken up in the clouds, to meet Christ, into the air" (1 Thess. iv. 16), and our then spiritual bodies shall have a power of ascending which is now justly denied to our animal souls. For, at present, what labour it costs us to lift up our hearts! And that because—as each of us may read in the book of his own sad experience—the corruption of the body is a load upon them, and the earthly habitation presseth them down (Wisdom ix. 15).

But perhaps it is necessary to explain to you what I mean by lifting up the heart, and in what manner it ought to be lifted up? Well, then, receive the explanation, not from myself, but from the Apostle: "If you be risen with Christ," he calls out to us, "seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Relish the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth" (Col. iii. 1, 2). As if he should say in clearer terms, "If you have arisen with Christ from the dead, ascend into heaven with Him also: if you live with Him, reign also with Him." Let us follow Him, brethren, let us "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth" (Apoc. xiv. 4). Let us follow Him in His suffering, let us follow Him in His rising, let us follow Him more joyously in His ascension into heaven. Let us see to it "that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, to the end that we may serve sin no longer" (Rom. vi. 6), having "mortified our members which are upon the earth" (Col. iii. 5). And "as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so let us also walk in newness of life" (Rom. vi. 4). "For to this end

Christ died and rose again" (Rom. xiv. 9), "that we, being dead to sins, might live to justice" (1 Peter ii. 24).

But inasmuch as this newness of life demands a safer abode than can be found upon earth, whilst the dignity of our moral resurrection requires a position more exalted, let us also follow Him in His ascension, that is to say, let us "seek the things that are above," where He reigns in glory, let us "relish the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth." Do you wish to know, my brethren, what is that place above whereof I am speaking? Attend to St. Paul: "That Jerusalem," he says, "which is above, is free, which is our mother" (Gal. iv. 26). And would you like me to tell you what is there to be seen? It is a vision of peace.* "Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem: praise thy God, O Sion. Because He hath strengthened the bolts of thy gates, He hath blessed thy children within thee, Who hath placed peace in thy borders" (Ps. cxlvii. 1-3). O peace, "which surpasseth all understanding" (Phil. iv. 7)! O measure above measure "pressed down, and shaken together, and running over" (Luke vi. 38)! Suffer, then, with Christ, O Christian soul, rise with Christ, ascend with Christ: all which thou shalt do by obeying the Prophet's injunction, "Turn away from evil and do good, seek after peace and pursue it" (Ps. xxxiii. 15). The Apostle also, as you may read in the Acts, gave his hearers the same recommendations, discoursing to them of justice and continence and the hope of eternal life (Acts xxiv. 25). And speaking to the same purpose, Truth Itself admonishes us in the Gospel to have our loins girt and our lamps lighted, and to be henceforth

* Jerusalem means "vision of peace."—(Translator.)

"like to men who wait for their Lord" (Luke xii. 35, 36).

But if you consider the matter carefully, you will notice that the Apostle is commending to us a two-fold ascension, in that he exhorts us not alone to seek but likewise to relish, not the things below, but the things which are above. And perhaps it will appear to you that the Prophet also wished to mark this distinction when he said, "Seek after peace and pursue it": so that to seek after the peace which we are bound to pursue, and to pursue it when the seeking is ended, signify the same respectively as to seek after what we should relish, and to relish what our seeking has found, that is to say, "the things which are above, not the things which are upon the earth." For as long as our hearts are divided, as long as they are found to have as yet many folds and do not appear to be perfectly one in themselves, so long do they require to be raised up little by little, and (if I may so speak) member by member, in order that they may be bound into unity in that heavenly Jerusalem "wherein all are united together" (Ps. cxxi. 3), where not alone each heart singly, but all collectively begin to "dwell together in unity" (Ps. cxxxii. 1), that is to say, neither divided in themselves nor from each other. Now the two principal of what I have called the members of our hearts or minds are the intellect and the will. These are frequently in opposition to each other, because whilst the former endeavours to mount to the things above, the latter desires to embrace the things below. But how great is the affliction, how great is the torment of the soul whilst she is thus distracted, thus dismembered, thus divided in herself, can be con-

jectured, at least, from a dislocation of the bodily limbs which we may all easily experience—in case any of you should have failed to observe it in his spirit, through an insensibility that would be very perilous, aye and very pernicious. Suppose, for instance, the legs of a man drawn in opposite directions, and the feet kept wide apart by means of a longish piece of wood placed between them: what intolerable anguish he would suffer, even though the skin remained as yet entire! *

Such, dearest brethren, such is the affliction which we observe with sorrow to have befallen those, who, although associating with us externally and perhaps similarly enlightened, are found to be very differently affected. They appear to know as well as their brothers that good which they ought to do; but their love of the good they know is not in proportion to their knowledge. For with regard to ignorance, what excuse can there be for any of us, whose minds are constantly fed with heavenly doctrine, for whom there is hardly ever any intermission of spiritual lectures and spiritual instruction? "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever modest, whatsoever just, whatsoever holy, whatsoever lovely, whatsoever of good fame, if there be any virtue, if any kind of discipline: these things you have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen" (Phil. iv. 8, 9) in the example and words of the perfect amongst you, whose counsels and conversations have fully enlightened all. Would to God that what has given light to the intellect gave also motion to the will! Then we should not experience in ourselves that most bitter contradiction and most painful divorce,

* Allusion to the punishment of the stocks.

one of our faculties drawing us up to the things above, the other dragging us down to the things that are upon the earth.

There are to be found in almost every religious community certain members who are always replenished with divine consolation and superabounding with heavenly joy; who are always pleasant and cheerful, always full of spiritual fervour; who meditate day and night on the law of the Lord (Ps. i. 2), often raising their eyes to heaven, and "lifting up pure hands in prayer" (1 Tim. ii. 8); who keep a careful watch over their conscience and show themselves diligent "pursuers of good works" (Titus. ii. 14); to whom monastic discipline appears pleasant, fasting sweet, manual labour attractive, watching in prayer a delight which never lasts long enough, in short, all the austere practices of our way of life easy and delectable. But you will find others of the contrary disposition: who are pusillanimous and remiss; who sink under the burden, and require to be stimulated with whip and spur; who grow lax in joy and cowardly in sadness; whose compunction is as infrequent as it is short-lived; whose thoughts are all carnal, and whose lives are all tepid; who obey without devotion and speak without prudence; who pray without recollection and read without profit; who lastly—as we may see for ourselves—can scarcely be held back by the fear of hell-fire, or hindered by shame, or governed by reason, or restrained by the discipline of the rule.* Does it not seem to you, my

* That is to say, by the penalties prescribed in the Holy Rule against transgressors. In its primary signification discipline means *training*, whence it is metonymically extended to express the *effect* of training, to wit, good order, and by a further use of the same figure of metonymy is sometimes made to

brethren, that "the life of such as these is drawing near to hell" (Ecclus. li. 9), since, whilst their intellect is opposing their will and their will their intellect, they are obliged to "put out their hand to strong things" (Prov. xxxi. 19), although they are not nourished with the bread of the strong, being the partners of our tribulation but not of our consolation? Let us, therefore, I beseech you, as many of us, I mean, as are such, let us arouse ourselves, let us repair the injuries we have done to our souls, let us recollect our spirits, and renounce for ever this accursed tepidity, if not because of its danger, if not because God is wont to vomit the lukewarm out of His mouth (Apoc. iii. 16), of which we have sometimes seen melancholy examples,* at least because it is so bitter, so full of misery and pain, because it is rightly regarded as the vestibule of hell and the shadow of death.

My brethren, if we truly seek the things above, let us strive to relish them also, and to enjoy a foretaste of them even during this our mortal existence. For it seems to me that we can without any impropriety understand of the intellect and the will respectively the Apostle's admonitions to seek the things above, and to relish the things above. That is to say, we are admonished to lift up our hearts to God in their two principal members (as I have already remarked) with the hands, so to speak, of pious affections and spiritual meditations. All of us, unless I mistake, seek the things that are above by the perception of faith and the

signify the *penalties* employed as a means to render training efficacious. In this third sense the word is often used in the Holy Rule of St. Benedict.—(Translator.)

* He means open apostasy from the religious state, as that of his own secretary, Brother Nicholas.—(Translator.)

judgment of reason, but we have not all the same relish for the things that are above, some of us being strongly drawn to the things that are upon the earth by a violent force of affection. For whence that diversity of disposition whereof I have been speaking? and that great variety of taste? and that equally great disparity of conduct? How is it that some are so devoid of spiritual grace whilst others are enriched with a superabundance? Certainly, the Giver of grace is neither poor nor parsimonious, but the oil cannot flow where there are no empty vessels (4 Kings iv. 6). The love of the world insinuates itself everywhere. With its consolations, or better call them desolations, it watches all the entrances of the soul: it leaps in through the windows and takes possession of the mind, not however of minds such as his who said, "My soul refused to be comforted: I remembered God and was delighted" (Ps. lxxvi. 3, 4). Now divine consolations keep aloof from the soul that is preoccupied with worldly desires. For there can be no commingling of true delights with false, of eternal with transient, of spiritual with sensual, of noble with base: you cannot at the same time relish the things above and the things that are upon the earth.

Happy, my brethren, happy are those two men in whom, as we read, the ascension of the Lord was prefigured, Henoch translated (Gen. v. 24; Ecclus. xliv. 16) and Elias taken up (4 Kings ii. 11). Happy indeed, because they alone of mortals live now entirely to God, they alone are completely absorbed in the contemplation, the love, and the enjoyment of Him.*

* Concerning the retreat of these holy men, there are three or rather four, opinions. Some, as SS. Ambrose and Jerome, believe them to be in the true heaven, enjoying God as do the

For to them who are known to have "walked with God" (Gen. v. 24) we can no longer apply the words of Wisdom, "the corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth upon many things" (Wisdom ix. 15). Every obstacle has been removed from their path, every occasion of sin put away, nothing comes nigh them that can either weigh down their will or depress their understanding. For Holy Scripture tells us of Henoch that he was taken away lest perhaps in his case evil should overcome wisdom (Wisdom vii. 30) and "lest wickedness should alter his understanding or deceit beguile his soul" (ibid. iv. 11) any more.

But for us, dearest brethren, where shall we find truth in this darkness, where shall we look for charity in this wicked world which, according to the Evangelist, "is wholly seated in malice" (1 John v. 19)? Can one be found, think you, who shall enlighten our intellect and inflame our will? Yes, undoubtedly, if

blessed. Others, as SS. Justin, Irenæus, and Thomas Aquinas, influenced by what is said in Ecclesiasticus xliv. 16: "Henoc pleased God and was translated into paradise," hold that they are both living in the terrestrial paradise, whither they were carried through the air. According to St. Gregory, Elias dwells alone in some secret part of the earth; whilst SS. Cyprian, Chrysostom, and Augustine consider it idle to speculate as to their whereabouts. One thing is admitted by all: that whatever be their place of abode, their life is passed in uninterrupted contemplation, God miraculously delivering them from the necessities of the body and even preserving their garments as He did for the Israelites in the desert (Deut. xxix. 5). As to whether they are still capable of meriting, authors are divided. Some affirm, on the ground that they are still "viatores" and to compensate them, so to speak, for the postponement of their beatitude. Suarez and Vasquez deny, for the reason that so great an extension of the time for meriting would enable them to surpass in holiness all the other saints with the exception of the Blessed Virgin. Cf. A Lapide in 4 Kings ii. 11. —(Translator).

only we are converted to Christ, so that the veil may be removed from our hearts (2 Cor. iii. 15, 16). For He it is of Whom the Prophet says, "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great Light; to them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death, Light is risen" (Is. ix. 2). For "God indeed, having winked at the times of this ignorance, hath now declared unto men that all should everywhere do penance," as St. Paul testified to the Athenians (Acts xvii. 30). Recall to mind the incarnated Word and Wisdom of God, Whose sole occupation during all the time when that unspeakable Power, that Divine Glory and Majesty, condescended to be "seen upon earth and to converse with men" (Bar. iii. 38), was to enlighten the eyes of men's hearts and to win them to faith by His preaching and miracles. So He said of Himself, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, wherefore He hath anointed Me, to preach the Gospel to the poor He hath sent Me" (Luke iv. 18). And on another occasion He spoke thus to His apostles, "Yet a little while the Light is among you. Walk whilst you have the Light, that the darkness overtake you not" (John xii. 35). Nor was it only before His passion that He appeared at more pains to instruct their understanding than to purify their will: He acted in the same way after His resurrection, "by many proofs for forty days appearing to them and speaking of the kingdom of God" (Acts i. 3), when He also "opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures" (Luke xxiv. 45).

How indeed could their minds, as yet carnal, have been brought to relish things spiritual? Not even had they the power to support for a moment the pure light of the Divinity, but could only contemplate the

Word in the flesh, the Sun in the cloud, the Light in the lamp, the Honey in the comb, the Candle in the lantern. "A Spirit before their face was Christ the Lord," but not yet without the shadow of faith under which they still "lived among the gentiles" (Lament. iv. 20). Nay, we read that the Virgin Mary herself was protected by this shadow (Luke i. 35), lest even her eagle eye should be dazzled by that excessive splendour, overpowered by the white light and most pure refulgence of the Godhead. And as for that "light cloud" (Is. xix. 1) of the Word's Humanity, that too, of necessity, had a purpose to fulfil, and was turned to account in the interests of our salvation. For the Saviour inspired with the love of His own Flesh the minds of the apostles, who could not have been brought to an understanding of the things of faith without some previous change in their affections, nor were they able as yet to rise to the love of things purely spiritual. Thus it was that at first they clung to Him as to a Man Who spoke and wrought wonders: clung to Him with a love that was human, I allow, and still carnal, yet very strong and superior to all other purely natural affections. This love may indeed be likened to that rod of Aaron which, transformed into a serpent, devoured all the serpents produced from the rods of the Egyptian enchanters (Exod. vii. 12). Hence Peter was able to say, "Behold we have left all things and have followed Thee" (Matt. xix. 27). Blessed, assuredly, were the eyes that beheld the Lord of majesty present in the flesh, the Creator of the world conversing amongst men and resplendent with all virtues, curing the sick, walking upon the waves, restoring the dead to life, commanding the demons,

and bestowing the like powers upon men; yet withal "meek and humble of heart" (Matt. xi. 29), kind, affable, overflowing with the bowels of compassion, the Lamb of God, without sin Himself, and bearing the sins of us all (Luke x. 23). Blessed also the ears which merited to hear the words of life from the lips of the incarnate Word. Blessed they to whom "the only-begotten Son Who is in the bosom of the Father declared" (John i. 18) and "made known all things whatsoever He hath heard of His Father" (John xv. 15), so that they drank in from the most pure source of Truth Itself the floods of heavenly doctrine which they were afterwards to pour out, or rather to belch forth (Ps. xliv. 1) for the refreshment of all peoples.

What wonder, therefore, if sadness filled their hearts on hearing Him declare that He was about to leave them, and adding, "Whither I go you cannot come now" (John xiii. 33)? What wonder, I say, if their souls were shaken and their hearts disquieted and their minds perplexed and their looks troubled and their hearing confounded? What wonder if they could not patiently endure to hear a word about His departure from them, about their being abandoned by Him for Whose sake they had renounced all things? But if Christ had drawn all the love of their hearts towards His own sacred Flesh, it was not with any intention that it should rest there finally, but in order that it might be transferred thence to the Spirit, so as to enable them to say sometime, "And although we have known Christ according to the flesh, now we know Him so no longer" (2 Cor. v. 16). Hence also that most loving-kind Master, comforting them with sweet consolation, said, "I will ask my Father, and

He shall give you another Paraclete, the Spirit of truth, that He may abide with you for ever" (John xiv. 16, 17). Also, "I tell you the truth: it is expedient to you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you: but if I go I will send Him to you" (John xvi. 7). Here, my brethren, we have a profound mystery. What means the expression, "If I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you?" Are we to suppose that the presence of Christ is displeasing to the Paraclete? or that the Holy Spirit abhors the society of the Lord's Flesh, Which, as we know from the Archangel's announcement, could not even have been conceived without His intervention? (Luke i. 35). Impossible! But how then shall we explain the words, "If I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you"? Perhaps the meaning is this: "Unless My sensible presence is withdrawn from you, your minds, thus preoccupied, cannot give admission to the fulness of heavenly grace, your souls cannot receive nor your hearts contain it." *

What think you, brethren? If what I have just been saying is true, nay, rather, because it is true, shall any lover of fallacious delights, any pursuer after the pleasures of the flesh, of that flesh which is the "flesh of sin" (Rom. viii. 3), begotten in sin, accustomed to sin, and in which "there dwelleth not that which is good" (Rom. vii. 18): shall any such person, I ask, presume to hope for the Divine Paraclete? What? Shall he who is always clinging to his dunghill, who fosters his flesh, who sows in the flesh and reaps in the flesh (Gal. vi. 8), have the boldness to expect

* A Lapide gives the same explanation of John xvi. 7.—Translator.)

the comfort of that heavenly visitation, to look for that "torrent of pleasure" (Ps. xxxv. 9), that grace of the "mighty Spirit" (Acts ii. 2), which, according to the testimony of Truth Itself, the apostles could not receive so long as they clung to the Flesh of the Word? He is assuredly in error, whosoever believes that there can be any alliance between that divine sweetness and this earth and ashes, between that celestial balsam and this prison, between those spiritual graces and these unworthy delights. And as for thee, O blessed Thomas, thou art deceived, thou art deceived, I say, if thou hopest to see thy Lord whilst separated from the society of thy brother-apostles (John xx. 24). He Who is subsisting Truth has no love for singularities; divisions do not please Him. He "standeth in the midst" (ibid. 26), that is to say, He is found in the common life and discipline, uniformity of observance is His delight. How long, therefore, O miserable man, wilt thou pursue thine own little particularities? How long wilt thou seek with so much labour the consolations of self-will, or beg for them with so much shame? "But then," thou mayest ask, "what am I to do?" "Cast out this bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free-born" (Gen. xxi. 10). For, as I have observed before, there can be no fellowship of truth with vanity, of light with darkness, of spirit with flesh, of fervour with tepidity.

"But in the meantime," perhaps thou wilt answer, "whilst the Spirit tarries, I cannot do without some consolation." Nay, my brother, be patient: "if He should make any delay wait for Him; for He shall surely come and shall not be slack" (Hab. ii. 3). The

apostles passed ten days in this expectation, "persevering with one mind in prayer with the women and Mary the Mother of Jesus" (Acts i. 14). Therefore, do thou likewise learn to pray; learn to ask, to seek and to knock, until thou shalt receive, and shalt find, and it shall be opened to thee (Matt. vii. 7). The Lord "knoweth our frame" (Ps. cii. 14); "and God is faithful, Who will not suffer us to be tempted above that which we are able" (1 Cor. x. 13). I am confident in Him that, if thou wilt faithfully wait for His coming, even before the tenth day shall thy patience be crowned. For He will surely "prevent with the blessings of sweetness" (Ps. xx. 4) the desolate soul that is given to prayer. Thus happily and "not unto folly in thee" (Ps. xxi. 3) "refusing to be comforted" (Ps. lxxvi. 3) by creatures, thou shalt "remember God and be delighted" (ibid. 4), thou "shalt be inebriated with the plenty of His house" and made to "drink of the torrent of His pleasure" (Ps. xxxv. 9). So the Prophet Eliseus is said to have prayed of yore, whilst lamenting that his sweetest consolation, namely, the presence of Elias, was about to be withdrawn from him. But consider carefully what it was he petitioned and what answer he received. "I beseech thee," he said to the elder Prophet, "that in me may be thy double Spirit" (4 Kings ii. 9). For he thought it necessary that the Spirit should be given him in double measure in order that the twofold grace might compensate for the loss of his master. Elias, therefore, answered and said, "If thou see me when I am taken from thee thou shalt have what thou hast asked" (ibid. 10). For the Spirit would be duplicated in him by the sight of his master ascending, who, borne up

to heaven before his eyes, would carry with him thither all his (Eliseus's) affections, so that he also might begin to "relish the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth" (Col. iii. 2): the Spirit, I say, he would receive in double measure from the vision of the departing Prophet, in the sense that to an enlightened understanding should be added a spiritualised affection, his heart being lifted up to heaven together with that flesh to which it was most tenderly attached.

In the case of the apostles also, and indeed more evidently, you may see the same thing accomplished. For when, "while they looked on," their beloved Master "was raised up" (Acts i. 9) and borne to heaven so manifestly that they had no longer any need to inquire, "Lord, whither goest Thou?" (John xiii. 36), they were taught by their faith, now endowed with the faculty of vision, if I may express it so, to "lift up pure hands in prayer" (1 Tim. ii. 8), with suppliant eyes upraised to God, eagerly imploring the promised gifts of grace: until "suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty Spirit coming" (Acts ii. 2), of the coming of that Fire doubtless Which the Lord Jesus was casting on the earth, and Which He desired should be mightily enkindled (Luke xii. 49). It is certain, indeed, that they had previously also received the Holy Ghost, that is, when "He, the Saviour, breathed on them and said: Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John xx. 21). But He came upon them on that occasion as the Spirit of faith and understanding to enlighten their intellect, rather than as the Spirit of fervour to inflame their will; and of this "double Spirit" they had need. First, the Word of the Father

taught them " discipline and knowledge " (Ps. cxviii. 66), and " filled their hearts with understanding " (Ecclus. xvii. 6). Afterwards the Divine Fire descended, and finding the vessels of their souls now clean, He poured into them a richer treasure of graces, and made their affections entirely spiritual. Thus, all inflamed with the charity which is " strong as death " (Cant. viii. 6), they would no longer deign—I do not say, to close their doors, but even to close their mouths " for fear of the Jews " (John xx. 19). With regard to ourselves, dearest brethren, in order to be prepared to receive that grace according to our little measure, let us strive to empty our hearts and souls completely of all earth's miserable and transient delights and consolations. And particularly during these days which separate us from the feast of Pentecost we should be found with more than ordinary fervour and fidelity " persevering with one mind in prayer " (Acts i. 14). Thus shall we deserve to be visited and comforted and confirmed by the Spirit of benignity, the Spirit of sweetness, the Spirit of fortitude, Who will strengthen what is weak in us, make smooth what is rough in us, and purify our hearts ; Who is one and the same Substance with the Father and the Son, yet not one and the same Person. For that the One Substance is Three in Person and the Three Persons One in Substance the Catholic Church most truly and most faithfully acknowledges, that Church which has been adopted by God the Father, espoused by God the Son, and confirmed by God the Holy Ghost, Who, as They are One in Nature, so do They reign One in glory for ever and ever. Amen.

FIRST SERMON FOR THE FEAST OF PENTECOST.

On the Six Operations of the Holy Ghost.

"*The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity.*"—Rom. viii. 26.

To-day, dearest brethren, we celebrate the solemn feast of the Holy Ghost, a feast assuredly that is worthy to be kept with all spiritual joy and with all devotion; because the Holy Ghost is the very sweetness of God, the very benignity of God, and Himself very God. If, therefore, we honour the festival days of the Saints, with how much greater reason should we honour His festival to Whom all the saints owe their sanctity? If we show respect for them who have been made holy how much more ought we to respect the Divine Author of their holiness? To-day, then, is the Holy Spirit's feast-day, because it was to-day that He, invisible in Himself, appeared to the apostles in visible form: just as the Son also, Who in His Divine Nature is invisible, condescended to make Himself visible in the flesh. To-day the Holy Ghost revealed to us something about His own Personality as we had already been taught something concerning the Personalities of the Father and the Son. For eternal life consists in a perfect knowledge of the Trinity. At present "we know in part" (1 Cor. xiii. 9), and we hold on faith the rest which we cannot understand. With respect to the Father, I know that He

is the Creator of the world,* since all creatures cry out in testimony, "He made us, and not we ourselves" (Ps. xcix. 3). And the Apostle says, "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made" (Rom. i. 20). But to comprehend His eternity or His immutability is far beyond me: with regard to such perfections "He inhabiteth light inaccessible" (1 Tim. vi 16). Concerning the Son also, through His grace, I know something very important, namely, that He has become man.

But "who shall declare His (divine) generation?" (Is. liii. 8). Who can comprehend how the Son is co-equal with His Father? Of the Holy Spirit likewise I am allowed to know something, not indeed the nature of that procession whereby He proceeds eternally from Father and Son, for that "knowledge is become wonderful to me; it is high, and I cannot reach to it"

* That is, by appropriation. It is axiomatic in theology that all the operations of God outside Himself are common to the three Divine Persons, because God operates "ad extra" not as He is three in Person, but as He is one in Nature and one in Will. Nevertheless, for reasons of special congruity or analogy—St. Thomas calls them "similitudes"—certain operations recognised as belonging equally to all three Persons are often found in Holy Scripture attributed in a particular way to One. Thus inasmuch as the Father is the Principle of the Divinity with regard to the Son and the Holy Ghost, and every power is a principle in relation to its effect, all manifestations of power, such as creation, are wont to be appropriated to the Father. Similarly, because the Son is the Wisdom or Knowledge of the Father and the Holy Ghost the mutual Love of Father and Son, the operations of enlightening our understanding and moving our will are appropriated respectively, to the Second and Third Persons, as by St. Bernard himself in the preceding discourse. Cf. St. Thomas, p. I. q. xxxix. a. 7, 8. Even the Incarnation is no exception to the rule that operations "ad extra" are common, for although *terminative* the Hypostatic Union is proper to the Son, *efficienter* it is common to the Trinity. Cf. Hurter, *Theol. Dogm.*, vol. ii. n. 494-5.

(Ps. cxxxviii. 6), but only the fact of His procession to men. There are two things, my brethren, which we have to take into account in the procession of the Holy Ghost, whence He proceeds, and whither. He proceeds from the Father and Son, and so far His procession "hath made darkness its covert" (Ps. xvii. 12); and He proceeds to us, and in this regard His procession began to be made known to-day, and is now manifest to all the faithful.*

And at first indeed—for so it was necessary—the invisible Spirit of God announced His advent by visible signs. But now, the more spiritual are the indications of His presence, the more congruous we recognise them to be, and the more worthy of Him Who is named the Holy Spirit. He then came upon the disciples in the form of fiery tongues, so that with tongues of fire they might preach the law of fire, and preach it in the languages of all nations. Let no one complain that this miraculous gift of the Spirit has not been accorded to us. For "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit" (1 Cor. xii. 7). And indeed, if I may be permitted to say so, that manifestation was given to the apostles more for our sakes than for theirs. For what need had they of the tongues of the nations except as a means to the con-

* In the Saint's *Sententiae* we read: "Scripture ascribes five operations to the Holy Ghost, namely, procession, inspiration, indwelling, replenishing, and glorification. His procession is said to be twofold, from one term and to another. Now, whence does He proceed and whither? He proceeds from the Father and the Son, He proceeds to the creature. By proceeding He predestinates, by inspiring He calls those whom He has predestinated, by His indwelling He justifies those whom He has called, by replenishing He enriches with merits those whom He has justified, by glorification He abundantly rewards those whom He has replenished with merits." Cf. St. Thomas, p. I. q. xliii. a. 6.—(Translator.)

version of the nations? But they were given another manifestation * which was more proper and personal, and this manifestation is continued in ourselves even to the present hour. Is it not evident that they who passed from such pusillanimity to such constancy of spirit, had been "endued with strength from on high" (Luke xxiv. 49)? They no longer take flight (Matt. xxvi. 56), they no longer conceal themselves "for fear of the Jews" (John xx. 19): they show greater courage now in preaching the Gospel than they showed cowardice not long since in hiding themselves. "This change of the right hand of the Most High" (Ps. lxxvi. 11) is made clearly apparent in the case of the Prince of the apostles, who once shook with terror at the words of a maid-servant (Matt. xxvi. 69, 70), and a short time afterwards, bore with fortitude the stripes to which he was condemned by the rulers (Acts v. 40). For the Scripture tells us that "they, namely, Peter and John, went from the presence of the council rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus" (ibid. 41), for the name of Him Whom, a few days before, when He was being led away to the same council, they had abandoned and left alone. Who can doubt that the "mighty Spirit" (Acts ii. 2) had descended upon them to enlighten and fortify their souls with His invisible power? In quite the same manner the operations which the Holy Ghost is carrying on within us even now render testimony to Him.

Therefore, inasmuch as we have received a command to avoid what is evil and to do what is good (Ps. xxxvi. 27), observe how "the Spirit helpeth our

* Cf. the Seventeenth Sermon on the Canticle of Canticles.

infirmity" (Rom. viii. 26) in regard to both. For "there are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 4). Accordingly, with the purpose to turn us away from evil, He operates three things within us, namely, compunction, supplication, and remission. Repentance for sin is the beginning of our conversion to God, and this repentance, not our own spirit, but the Spirit of God operates in us, as reason manifestly teaches and authority defines. Where is the man who, having come cold to the fire and warmed himself, can seriously doubt that the heat which he could not have enjoyed without the presence of the fire, has come to him really from the fire? In the same way, therefore, he that was once cold in impiety and began afterwards to glow with the heat of a fervent repentance, ought to feel assured that another Spirit has descended upon him, and is reproving and condemning his own. For this we have the authority of Christ Himself, Who tells us in the Gospel, speaking of the Spirit Whom the believers were about to receive, that "when He—the Paraclete—is come, He will reprove * the world because of sin" (John xvi. 8).

But what is the use of repentance unless it be accompanied with supplication for pardon? It is necessary, therefore, that the Spirit should operate this in us also, replenishing our minds with the peculiar sweetness of hope, so that we may ask "in faith, nothing wavering" (James i. 6). Do you wish me to prove that this likewise is the work of the Holy Spirit? I say, then, that so long as He is absent, you can discover no such power of supplication in your own spirit.

* "Arguet"—the Douay Version has "He will convince," which does not suit the context here. Cf. A Lapide.—(Translator.)

Besides, we have it on the authority of St. Paul that He it is by Whom "we cry Abba, Father" (Rom. viii. 15). And the same Apostle assures us that "the Spirit Himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings" (ibid. 26). Both these operations of repentance and supplication the Holy Ghost accomplishes within our own hearts. But what does He do in the heart of the Father? As dwelling in us, He makes intercession for us; so, dwelling in the Father, He forgives with the Father: He is our Advocate with the Father in our hearts, He is our Lord in the Father's heart. Accordingly, what we supplicate is granted by the same Spirit Who has inspired our supplication. And as He lifts us up to God in loving confidence, so does He make God incline to us in loving compassion. But that you may know with full certainty that the remission of our sins is also an operation of the Holy Ghost, hear what Christ once said to His apostles, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them" (John xx. 22, 23). So much for the operations whereby "the Spirit helpeth our infirmity" in the avoidance of evil.

Let us now consider what help to do good we receive from "the good Spirit" (Luke xi. 13). He admonishes us, He moves us, He instructs us. He admonishes our memory (John xiv. 26), He moves our will, He instructs our reason: of which three faculties our souls entirely consist.* He suggests what is good to the memory in holy meditations, and thus banishes from our minds pusillanimity and sloth. Therefore,

* Cf. *Sermons on the Canticle of Canticles*, vol. i. p. 94, note (Mount Melleray Translation), also the Treatise *On Consideration*, p. 188.

my brethren, as often as you become conscious of these promptings to good in your hearts, give glory to God and reverence the Holy Spirit Whose voice is sounding in your ears (Cant. ii. 14). For it is He "That speaketh justice" (Is. lxiii. 1). And in the Gospel we hear the Lord saying of the Paraclete, Whom the disciples were about to receive, "He will bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you" (John xiv. 26). Observe also the words which immediately precede, "He will teach you all things" (ibid.). For I have stated that it is one of the works of the Holy Spirit to instruct the reason. Many are admonished to do good, but know not what the good is that they ought to do unless the grace of the Holy Ghost comes again to their assistance. He must teach us how to carry out in action the good thought wherewith He inspires us: otherwise His grace in us shall be void (1 Cor. xv. 10). What more remains for Him to do? "To him that knoweth to do the good and doth it not, to him it is sin" (James iv. 17). Consequently, we require not only to be admonished and instructed, but also to be moved and drawn towards the good by the same Spirit Who "helpeth our infirmity," and by Whom "the charity of God—that is to say, a good will—is poured forth in our hearts" (Rom. v. 5).

When, therefore, the Spirit comes and thus takes complete possession of the soul, by admonishing and instructing and moving her; speaking ever in our thoughts, so that we also can hear what the Lord God is saying in us (Ps. lxxxiv. 9), enlightening our understanding, and inflaming our will: does it not seem to you, brethren, that the whole house of our

soul has become filled with "parted tongues, as it were, of fire" (Acts ii. 3)? For, as I have said already, the soul is constituted entirely of memory, intellect, and will. The division of the tongues may be taken to represent the multiplicity of our thoughts, which in their very multiplicity can be said to resemble flames of fire, when the same light of truth and the same heat of charity appear manifest in all. Or perhaps I had better say that the filling of the whole house is reserved for the end, when "good measure and pressed down and shaken together and running over they shall give into your bosom" (Luke vi. 38). But "when shall these things be" (Matt. xxiv. 3)? Doubtless, "when the days of the pentecost shall have been accomplished" (Acts ii. 1). Happy they who have already entered upon the quinquagesima of repose and the year of jubilee (Levit. xxv.). I speak of our brothers to whom "the Spirit hath said that they may rest from their labours" (Apoc. xiv. 13). For this also appertains to the Spirit. There are two spiritual seasons, my brethren, which we have to celebrate. The one may be called quadragesima, the other quinquagesima; the one pre cedes the passion, the other follows the resurrection; the one is passed in compunction of heart and the lamentations of penance, the other in joyousness of spirit and in the chanting of solemn alleluias; the one is all the time of this present life; the other begins after death and is the period of the repose of the saints. But when this quinquagesima also comes to an end in the general resurrection and final judgment, "the days of pentecost being accomplished," then the Spirit shall descend in His fulness and the whole house shall be filled. For "the whole earth shall be filled with

His majesty" (Ps. lxxi. 19), when not only shall the soul be purified, but the body too "shall rise a spiritual body," if yet, according to the Apostle's admonition, it has been sown in Christ whilst still an "animal body" (1 Cor. xv. 44).*

* Cf. vol. i. p. 323, note.

SECOND SERMON FOR THE FEAST OF PENTECOST.

On What the Blessed Trinity has done for Man, and on the Threefold Grace of the Holy Ghost.

"Sow for yourselves unto justice, reap the hope of life, light for yourselves the lamp of knowledge."—Osee x. 12.*

To-day, most dearly beloved, "the earth was moved and the heavens dropped down dew from the face of the God of Sinai, from the face of the God of Israel," and a "free rain was set aside for the inheritance" of Christ (Ps. lxvii. 9, 10). For the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father, descended to-day upon the apostles with a more generous communication of His majesty and replenished their souls with the gifts of His graces. After the magnificence of the Lord's resurrection, after the glory of His ascension, after His exaltation to the seat at the Father's right hand, what more remained except that the joy which is "the expectation of the just" (Prov. x. 28) should be fulfilled and that heavenly-minded men should be crowned with the gifts of heaven? And consider if the Prophet Isaias did not predict all this long before, in due order and in language well suited to the dignity of the events he was announcing. "In that day," he says, "the Bud of the Lord shall be in magnificence and

* This is according to the Septuagint. The Vulgate reading is altogether different: "Sow for yourselves in justice and reap in the mouth of mercy and break up your fallow ground."—(Translator.)

glory, and the fruit of the earth shall be high, and a great joy to them that shall have been saved of Israel" (Is. iv. 2). Now, "the Bud of the Lord" is Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who alone of men has not been conceived from unclean seed (Job xiv. 4): because, although He came "in the *likeness* of sinful flesh" (Rom. viii. 3), He yet did not come in the *reality* of sinful flesh; and although He is a son of Adam's flesh, He is no son of Adam's transgression: for He was not "by nature a child of wrath, even as all the rest" (Ephes. ii. 3) who have all been "conceived in iniquities" (Ps. l. 7). Accordingly, that Bud Which sprouted forth from Jesse's rod (Is. xi. 1) of virginal greenness, was "in magnificence" after the resurrection from the dead. For then, "O Lord my God, Thou wert exceedingly magnified, Thou didst put on praise and beauty, and wert clothed with light as with a garment" (Ps. ciii. 1, 2). But how great was Thy glory in Thy ascension, when, in the midst of multitudes of angels and sanctified human souls, Thou didst mount up in triumphal procession even to the Father's throne, and, entering heaven with the palm of victory, didst set the assumed Humanity on the very seat of God! Who can conceive, not to speak of expressing—how much "the fruit of the earth" was then exalted when Thy Human Nature was enthroned at the Father's right hand with a glory which, doubtless, dazzles the eyes of the celestial intelligences, which the holy angels contemplate with awe, but dare not aspire to! Therefore, O Lord Jesus, let that "great joy" come to them "that have been saved of Israel," to Thy apostles, namely, whom Thou hast "chosen before the foundation of the world" (Ephes. i. 4). Let Thy "good

Spirit" (Luke xi. 13) come upon them to wash away their sins and to infuse virtues: let Him descend in the spirit of judgment, in the spirit of fervour.

Come, then, my brethren, come and let us review in our minds all the operations of the Holy Trinity concerning us and for our advantage, from the beginning of the world even unto the end thereof; and let us see how much solicitude has been shown by that Divine Majesty to Whom belong the administration and government of the whole world, lest He should lose us, His poor creatures, for ever. In the beginning He created all things with power, and He governed all things with wisdom; and men had clear evidences of both these perfections, namely, of the divine power and wisdom, in the constitution and conservation of this universal frame. There was goodness in God, and goodness exceeding great. But it lay hidden as yet in the heart of the Father, although destined to be poured out sometime, at the proper season, upon the children of Adam's race. Nevertheless, even then the Lord was saying, "I am thinking thoughts of peace" (Jer. xxix. 11), that is, He was thinking of sending to us Him Who is "our peace, Who hath made both one"* (Ephes. ii. 4), so that He might now give us peace upon peace, "peace to them that are afar off and peace to them that are near" (Is. lvii. 19). Therefore, His own loving-kindness induced the Word of God, enthroned on high, to descend to us; His mercy drew Him down; His veracity, wherewith He had promised to visit us, constrained Him; the spotlessly pure womb of the Virgin received Him, without the

* That is, Who hath united Jews and Gentiles in one Church. Cf. A Lapide.—(Translator.)

least prejudice to her virginity; He was brought forth by His own power; obedience He made His guide in all the different circumstances of life; patience was His armour; and His charity revealed itself in all His words and in all His wonders.

Assuredly I have now in my own evils and in the benefits of my Lord abundant motives to "think on my ways and to turn my feet into His testimonies" (Ps. cxviii. 59). For truly His benefits are ineffable: to sum up all in one word, the Wisdom of God in all the infinitude of His resources was able to find nothing more excellent wherewith to redeem us than the price He has actually paid. Besides, "evils without number have surrounded me; my iniquities have overtaken me and I was not able to see. They are multiplied above the hairs of my head" (Ps. xxxix. 13). These, my brethren, are the words of a just man. And in another place he says, "For Thy name's sake, O Lord, Thou wilt pardon my sin, for it is great" (Ps. xxiv. 11). A wily serpent was sent by the devil to instil the poison of his malice into the woman's soul through the avenue of her ear, and thus to infect all her posterity in their very origin. In due time, "the Angel Gabriel was sent from God" (Luke i. 26) in order to open a way through the Virgin's ear to her heart and her womb for the Word of the Father: so that the antidote might enter by the same way as the poison. Truly "we have seen His glory, the glory as it were of the Only-Begotten of the Father" (John i. 14). For whatever Christ has brought us from the Father's heart is all paternal; and so our human timidity has no cause to expect to find anything in the Son of God but what is sweet and indulgent. "From the sole of the foot unto

the top of the head there was no soundness" (Is. i. 6) in us. We had "gone astray from the womb" (Ps. lvii. 4): we had incurred the sentence of damnation before we had seen the light of day, having been conceived in sin and from sin.

Christ, accordingly, there first applied the remedy where the wound was first inflicted. The Word descended substantially into the Virgin's womb and was conceived by the Holy Ghost, in order to purify our conception, which the evil spirit, if he had not caused it, had at least contaminated. Thus not even His life in His Mother's womb was without profit to us, where for nine months He occupied Himself with the work of cleansing the ancient sore, probing the foul ulcer to the quick, as the saying is, in order to restore us to everlasting health. And so He even then "wrought salvation in the midst of the earth" (Ps. lxxiii. 12), that is to say, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, whom with admirable propriety the Prophet calls "the midst of the earth." For to Mary, as to the focal point of the universe, as to the ark of God, as to the cause or reason of all things,* as to the centre and cynosure

* According to the Scotistic theory of the Incarnation, it is easy enough to understand in what sense the Blessed Virgin can be called the cause of all things. For if the decree of the Incarnation was first, and antecedent to the prevision of the fall, and all other creatures for the sake of the Incarnate Word (cf. Faber's *Bethlehem*, p. 21), since the fact of the Incarnation was dependent upon Mary's consent, she may justly be regarded as in this sense the cause of creation. Or it may be meant that she is the cause of all things, as having given birth to Him Who is the Creator of all. Possibly, however, there is question here of *final* cause, and the Saint may only mean that the world was made in a more especial sense for Mary: for if St. Paul could say to the faithful of Corinth, "All things are yours, whether it be the world or life or death, or things present or things to come," with still greater truth could it be said of her. We read in the life of St. Teresa that Christ once said

of the ages,* are attracted the eyes of all who dwell in heaven or in limbo; of the past, of the present, and of all future generations. Those who are in heaven look to her, because it is through her that they hope to have their numbers filled up; those in limbo look to her for their deliverance; those who have gone before look to her, "that the prophets may be found faithful" (Ecclus. xxxvi. 18); and those who shall come after shall look to her for their glorification. Thus, O Mother of God, O Sovereign Lady of the world, O Queen of heaven, thus do "all generations call thee blessed" (Luke i. 48). Yes, all generations, the heavenly no less than the earthly. For there are generations in heaven just as there are generations on earth. This is evident from the words of St. Paul, where he speaks of God as "the Father of spirits" (Heb. xii. 9) "of Whom," as he says in another place, "all paternity in heaven and earth is named" (Ephes. iii. 15). Therefore, "from henceforth all generations shall call thee blessed," because to all generations thou hast given life and glory. For in thee the angels shall for ever find gladness, the just grace, and sinners pardon. With good reason, then, are the eyes of all the world directed towards thee, since it is in thee and through thee and from thee that the kindly hand of Omnipotence has renewed whatever He had originally created.

Wilt Thou vouchsafe, Lord Jesus, to give me Thy

to her, "Had I not already created the world, I would do so now for thy sake": and behold a greater than St. Teresa is here (Matt. xii. 42).—(Translator.)

* In the same sense he speaks of her in the second Sermon on the Glories of the Virgin Mother as "chosen from eternity, foreknown and prepared for Himself by the Most High, guarded by angels, exhibited by the patriarchs under types and figures, announced from afar by the prophets."

life also, as Thou hast given me Thy conception? For not only is my own conception unclean, but my death is evil, my life full of peril, and after the death of the body there remains for me a more terrible death, "the second death" (Apoc. xx. 6). "I will give thee," He makes answer, "not alone My conception, but My life as well; and I will give thee that life in all its various stages of infancy, childhood, youth, and manhood, adding thereto My death, My resurrection, My ascension, and the mission of the Holy Ghost; to the end that My conception may purify thine, that My life may be a pattern for thine, that My death may destroy thine, that My resurrection may be followed by thine, that My ascension may open the way for thine, and that, finally, thou mayest have My Holy Spirit to help thy infirmity (Rom. viii. 26). For so thou shalt clearly see the way wherein thou shouldst walk, with what circumspection thou oughtest to advance, and to what goal thy steps must be directed. In My life thou wilt see thy way; and as I walked unswervingly in the paths of poverty and obedience, of humility and patience, of charity and mercy, so must thou do also, following My footsteps, and declining neither to right nor to left. And in My death I will communicate to thee My justice, putting an end to the yoke of thy captivity, and beating off the enemies that are in thy way or beside thy way, so that they may not have power to hurt thee (Ps. lxxxviii. 23). Thereafter, I will return to My home on high whence I have descended, and restore the joy of My presence to the ninety-nine sheep that have remained upon the mountains, whilst I came down to search for thee and—not to lead thee back—but to bear thee back upon My shoulders (Luke xv. 4).

"And lest thou shouldst complain or be cast down because of My absence, I will send the Holy Spirit the Paraclete, Who will bestow upon thee the pledge of salvation, the strength of life, and the light of knowledge. He will give thee the pledge of salvation in that the 'Spirit Himself will render testimony to thy spirit that thou art the son of God' (Rom. viii. 16), impressing upon thy heart and revealing to thy conscience the most evident signs of thy predestination, filling thy mind with gladness, and enriching thy soul, if not continually, at least very often, with the dew of heaven by His consolations. He will give thee the strength of life, whereby that which is impossible to thee by nature shall become through His grace, not only possible, but even easy: so that thou shalt begin to take delight in labours and watchings, in hunger and thirst, and in all other such penitential observances 'as in all riches' (Ps. cxviii. 14); whereas 'there is death in the pot' (4 Kings iv. 40) whenever these austerities are not seasoned with the mystical meal of divine grace. And He will impart to thee the light of knowledge, by which, when thou hast done all things well, thou shalt repute thyself an unprofitable servant (Luke xvii. 10), and whatever of good thou mayest discover in thyself, thou shalt attribute it all to Him Who is the Source of all good, and without Whom thou couldst not begin, much less accomplish anything at all, no matter how insignificant. In these three things, therefore, the Spirit will teach thee all things, all things, I mean, which are conducive to thy salvation: because in them, viz., in the pledge of salvation, the strength of life, and the light of knowledge thou shalt find full and absolute perfection."

This, my brethren, is only what the Spirit Himself has told us, speaking by the mouth of His Prophet "Sow for yourselves unto justice"—which refers to the pledge of salvation; "reap the fruit of life"—which signifies the same as the strength of life; "light for yourselves the lamp of knowledge" (Osee x. 12, juxta LXX)—which needs no comment. Hence the same Holy Spirit appeared descending upon the apostles in the form of fire, to indicate that He is the Source of both light and heat. For those whom He fills with His presence, He causes to burn with spiritual ardour and to know in truth that it is the divine mercy alone which prevents them and leads them on. David, that great servant of the Lord, must surely have studied this mercy in all its various aspects when he sang, "My God, His mercy shall prevent me" (Ps. lviii. 11); and "Thy mercy is before my eyes" (Ps. xxv. 3); also, "Thy mercy will follow me all the days of my life" (Ps. xxii. 6); again, "Who crowneth thee with mercy and compassion"; lastly, "My God, my mercy" (Ps. lviii. 18). Oh, how sweetly, Lord Jesus, didst Thou "converse with men" (Bar. iii. 38)! How multitudinous and precious were the gifts Thou didst bestow upon men! With how much fortitude Thou didst endure so many outrages and sufferings for the sake of men!—so that they "might suck honey out of the rock and oil out of the hardest stone" (Deut. xxxii. 13). For in truth He appeared to be as insensible as a stone to insults, more insensible still to stripes, and still more insensible to the horrors of the cross, since in all His passion He was "led as a sheep to the slaughter," "and He opened not His mouth" (Is. liii. 7). You see, my brethren, how true are the words of him who

said, "The Lord is careful for me" (Ps. xxxix. 18). For in order to redeem a slave, the Father "spared not even His own Son" (Rom. viii. 32), the Son most willingly delivered Himself up, both Father and Son sent down the Holy Spirit, and "the Spirit Himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings" (ibid. 26).

O ye hard, ye insensible, ye stony-hearted sons of Adam, whom so much kindness cannot soften! whom such a flame, such an intensity of love cannot melt! who are not touched by the generosity of Him Who, in the excess of His charity, has paid so high a price for goods so worthless! For it is "not with corruptible things, such as gold or silver," that He hath redeemed us, but with His own most precious Blood (1 Peter i. 18, 19) Which He poured out abundantly in generous streams through the five wounds of His Body. Well might He ask "What is there that I ought to do more for you that I have not done?" (Is. v. 4). He has given sight to the blind, He has brought the wanderers back, He has reconciled the guilty, He has justified the ungodly, for three and thirty years "He was seen on earth and conversed with men," yea, died for men, the Same Who "spoke and they—the Seraphim and the Cherubim and all the celestial powers—were made, He commanded and they were created" (Ps. xxxii. 9), Who is able to do all things according as He pleases. What, then, does He require of thee, Who has sought thee with so much solicitude, except that thou for the future shouldst "walk solicitous with thy God" (Mich. vi. 8)? Now this solicitude cannot come to thee otherwise than from the bounty of the Holy Ghost, Who searcheth "the deep things" (1 Cor. ii. 10) of our breast, Who is the "Discerner of the thoughts

and intents of the heart" (Heb. iv. 12), and Who will not suffer the least dross to remain in the soul He has chosen for His dwelling, but will at once burn it all out with the fire of the most minute circumspection. It is this Holy Spirit, I say, all sweetness and delight, Who bends our wills, or rather Who straightens them out, and conforms them to His own, enabling us to understand it rightly, to love it ardently, and to accomplish it effectually.

THIRD SERMON FOR THE FEAST OF PENTECOST.

On the Different Ways in which the Holy Ghost is Communicated.

" Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew the Right Spirit within my bowels.
" Cast me not away from Thy face, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
" Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and strengthen me with the Principal Spirit."—Ps. l. 12-14.

The Holy Spirit of God, Whose feast, Whose great feast we are celebrating to-day—and would I might say, with great devotion!—He knows well how gladly I share with you, dearest brethren, whatever lights His Sovereign Majesty condescends to impart to me. He it is Who makes you dwell in peace together, not in one city, but in the same house (Ps. lxvii. 7), so that He may repose upon the reposeful and rest upon the humble and them that tremble at His words (Is. lxvi. 2). It is He also Who of old overshadowed Mary (Luke i. 35), tempering the force of the descending Godhead to the weakness of her virginal frame; and Who fortified the apostles, " enduing them with power from on high " (Luke xxiv. 49), that is to say, with the most fervent charity. For charity it was which the holy apostles put on, as a giant his breastplate, " to execute vengeance upon the nations, chastisements among the people; to bind their kings with fetters, and their nobles with manacles of iron " (Ps. cxlix. 7, 8). Having been sent into the house of the " strong man " to bind

him fast and to despoil him of his goods (Mark iii. 27), it was necessary for them to be armed with superior strength. How indeed could they have triumphed over death, how was it possible that the gates of hell should not prevail against them (Matt. xvi. 18), if they had not dwelling in them that which alone could conquer in them: the love that is "strong as death," the zeal that is "hard as hell" (Cant. viii. 6)? It was with this holy zeal they were really intoxicated when the Jews declared them to be drunk with wine. It may be granted, however, that they were drunk with wine, yet not with that wine which the incredulous imagined. Yes, I allow that they were intoxicated, but with "new wine" (Acts ii. 13), which the old bottles were not worthy to receive nor strong enough to contain (Mark ii. 22). For this wine has been poured down from heaven by Christ, the true Vine (John xv. 5). It is the wine which "cheereth the heart of man" (Ps. ciii. 15), instead of subverting his reason; the wine which "causeth virgins to spring forth" (Zach. ix. 17), not that which "maketh wise men to fall off" (Ecclus. xix. 2). It is new wine, I say, but only to us who dwell upon the earth. For in heaven there has always been a superabundance of it, although it is not there kept either in bottles or in earthen vessels, but in spiritual wine-cellars and store-rooms (Cant. ii. 4). It has been always flowing through the streets and ways of the city of God, that wine wherein is joy of spirit, not luxury of the flesh (Ephes. v. 18). But the "earth-born and the sons of men" (Ps. xlviii. 3) had no knowledge of this kind of wine until the day of Pentecost.

Thus the citizens of heaven possessed a species of wine proper to themselves and unknown as yet to the

inhabitants of earth. The earth, however, was not without its own consolation, since it could boast of the Humanity of Christ, for the joy of Whose presence all in heaven were thirsting. Why, then, should not there be a most just and most friendly commerce between heaven and earth, between the angels and the apostles, the wine of the Spirit being exchanged for the Body of Christ, so that heaven might become the home of the Lord's Humanity and earth the dwelling place of the Holy Ghost, and that thus all things might henceforth be common to all? "If I go not," said the Saviour to His disciples, "the Paraclete will not come to you" (John xvi. 7). That is to say, "Unless you relinquish what you love you shall not get what you desire. 'It is expedient to you, therefore, that I go' (ibid.). And you yourselves also I purpose to translate from earth to heaven, from the flesh to the spirit." For the Son is a Spirit, and the Father is a Spirit, and the Holy Ghost is a Spirit. Of the Son the Prophet says, "A Spirit before our face is Christ the Lord" (Lam. iv. 20). The Father too, is a Spirit, and because He is a Spirit, He seeketh such as shall "adore Him in spirit and in truth" (John iv. 23). But the Holy Ghost is called a Spirit as it were in a particular sense, because He proceeds by way of spiration from the Father and Son, being the most secure and indissoluble Bond of the Blessed Trinity; and He is called holy also by appropriation, because He is the Gift of the other two Persons, by Whom holiness is produced in every creature. Nevertheless, the Father is equally a Spirit and equally holy, and the Son is equally a Spirit and equally holy: the one all-holy and Divine Spirit "of Whom and by Whom and in

Whom are all things," as the Apostle speaks (Rom. xi. 36).*

My brethren, there are three questions which we ought to ponder with regard to the things which compose the great world about us: what they are? how they are disposed? and for what purpose have they been made? The existing universe speaks to our minds of the incomprehensible power which could produce things so many, so great, so multiform, and so magnificent. In the disposition of its parts there is revealed to us an incomparable wisdom whereby some bodies are placed above, others below, others in the centre, in a most orderly collocation. But if you reflect on the end for which the world was made, you will discover such beneficent kindness, such kind beneficence as ought to overwhelm with gratitude even the most ungrateful by reason of the multitude and the magnitude of its useful effects. Thus the Creator has manifested the infinitude of His power in producing all things from nothing, He has manifested the infinitude of His wisdom in disposing all things in beautiful order, and the infinitude of His goodness in ordaining all things to our profit. Nevertheless, we know that there have been many from the beginning, and we see there are many still amongst the children of men, who, immersed in the sensual enjoyment of the inferior goods of this visible world, devote all their attention to the things that are made, neglecting to consider in what order they have been made or for what end. Do not such persons deserve to be called carnally-minded? On the other hand, we learn from history that there were some in

* Cf. St. Thomas, p. 1. q. xxxvi. a. 1, and q. xxxviii. a. 1, also A Lapide on this verse.

former times—I believe they have very few successors, if any at all, in our own day—whose all-engrossing occupation and only care it was to investigate the laws and disposition of natural objects, so that for the most part they not merely disdained to inquire about the utility of things for human ends, but magnanimously despised them under this aspect, using only the vilest of them for food, and in the scantiest measure. These men called themselves philosophers; but in my opinion, they should rather be called the slaves of curiosity and pride.

To both of these classes of men there has succeeded another more prudent than either, the class of those, namely, who, without troubling themselves overmuch to find out what things have been made, or in what order, give all their attention to the task of discovering the purpose of these things. Nor has it escaped such inquirers that the "Lord hath made all things for Himself" (Prov. xvi. 4), and all things also for His elect (1 Cor. iii. 22). Not in the same sense, however, did He make them for His own sake and for ours. For when it is said that He made all things for Himself, we have commended to us the first origin and source of all things; but when we are told He made all things for His elect, we are reminded of the fruit to ourselves from the works of His hand. He hath made all things for His own sake, because all have proceeded from His own gratuitous goodness; and He hath made all things for His elect, because all are destined for their utility; so that the divine goodness is the efficient cause, and man's profit the final.* They of this third class are spiritual men who "use this world as if they used it not" (1 Cor.

* Cf. A Lapide on 1 Cor. iii. 22.

vii. 31) and "seek God in simplicity of heart" (Wisdom i. 1), with but little curiosity to know about the revolution of the spheres. Such persons are filled with divine truth, as those of the first class are filled with pleasure and those of the second with vanity.

I rejoice to know, dearest brethren, that you belong to this third school, the school of the Holy Ghost, where you are being taught "goodness and discipline and knowledge" (Ps. cxviii. 66), so that each one of you can say with the Psalmist, "I have understood more than all my teachers" (ibid. 99). Wherefore, O my brother, dost thou make such a boast? Is it because thou art clothed with purple and fine linen and feastest more sumptuously than any one else? (Luke xvi. 19). Or perhaps it is because thou hast understood or hast endeavoured to understand the reasonings of Plato and the subtleties of Aristotle? "God forbid!" thou answerest, "It is because I have sought Thy commandments, O Lord" (Ps. cxviii. 100). Happy the man who reposes in this nuptial couch of the Holy Ghost so that he may be able to understand that threefold Spirit of Whom the same servant of the Lord, "wise above the ancients" (ibid.), exclaimed and sang, "Cast me not away from Thy face, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me" (Ps. l. 13), "Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew the Right Spirit within my bowels" (ibid. 12), "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and strengthen me with the Principal Spirit" (ibid. 14). By the Holy Spirit we must understand Him Who is properly and personally designated by this title. The Prophet, therefore, prayed that he might not be cast away from the presence of the Holy Ghost as something unclean, because the Spirit of God

abhors filthiness and will not "dwell in a body subject to sins" (Wisdom i. 4). For as it is proper to Him to banish sin, so also is it proper to Him to hate sin: neither can infinite Purity and the foulness of corruption dwell together in the same abode. Accordingly, when one has received the Holy Ghost through the grace of sanctity, "without which no man shall see God" (Heb. xii. 14), may one now presume to appear before His face, as being washed and cleansed, in so far forth that he now abstains from every kind of evil conduct, and is able to confine his actions, if not his involuntary thoughts, within the limits appointed by reason?

No, dearest brethren, but inasmuch as evil and "perverse thoughts separate us from God" (Wisdom i. 3), I must implore Him to "create a clean heart in me," which He will do by "renewing the Right Spirit within my bowels." In my judgment, this "Right Spirit" may be taken not improperly to mean the Son of God, Who, stripping us of the old man, has clothed us in the new (Ephes. iv. 22-24; Col. iii. 9, 10), Who has renewed us in the spirit of our mind (Ephes. iv. 23), as it were in our bowels, to the end that we may think what is right, and may walk in the "newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (Rom. vii. 6). For Christ brought the pattern of all righteousness with Him from heaven and left it behind upon earth, where He mingled and combined rectitude and sweetness in every one of His works as the Psalmist foretold of Him when he said, "The Lord is sweet and righteous, therefore He will give a law to sinners in the way" (Ps. xxiv. 8). Having therefore chastened my body by holiness of action and cleansed or rather renewed my heart by rectitude of thought, I shall have restored to me now

the joy of God's salvation, so that I may begin to "walk in the light of His countenance and to exult in His name all the day long" (Ps. lxxxviii. 17).

What more remains except that I be strengthened by the "Principal Spirit"* This Principal Spirit I take to be God the Father; not because I think Him greater than the other two Persons, but because He alone is without origin, the Son being generated by Him and the Holy Ghost proceeding from Him and the Son. But in what particularly will the Principal Spirit strengthen me? Doubtless in the virtue of charity. For what other gift would be worthy of the Father? What other kindness could be so paternal? Hear how the Apostle cries out, "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword?" (Rom. viii. 35). But be "sure that neither death nor life" nor any of the other things which the Apostle goes on to mention in such number and with such boldness "shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus" (ibid. 38, 39). Does not every word of this passage prove what I have said about our being strengthened in charity? Knowest thou "how to possess thy vessel in sanctification and honour, not in the passion of lust" (1 Thess. iv. 4, 5)? If so, thou hast received the Holy Spirit. Hast thou the will to do to other men all things whatsoever thou wouldst that they should do to thee (Matt. vii. 12), and to abstain from doing to another that which thou art

* SS. Augustine and Jerome also understand by the Principal Spirit, the Right Spirit, and the Holy Spirit, the First, Second, and Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, respectively. Cf. Bellarmin on Ps. l. 13.—(Translator.)

unwilling should be done to thyself? If so, be assured that thou hast also received the "Right Spirit," given to guide thee in thy intercourse with thy neighbour. For that is the righteousness enjoined as well by the law which God has implanted in our hearts as by that which He has revealed to us through the Holy Scripture. Furthermore, if thou perseverest with constancy in both these graces, viz., holiness of body and rectitude of mind, and in all that appertains to them, thou hast certainly received the "Principal Spirit," thou hast the one disposition which God approves: for that which is changeable, which exists now and is now no more, cannot be acceptable to Him Who alone truly is. He Who is eternal cannot take pleasure in what is momentary. Consequently, if thou desirest that God shall choose thee for His own, let it be thy anxious concern to exhibit to His eyes, Who is the true Prince and "Father of Spirits" (Heb. xii. 9), this "Principal Spirit," just as thou must have the Holy Spirit for the sanctification of thy body, and the "Right Spirit" to regulate thy conduct towards thy neighbour.

Manifold in truth is the Spirit of God (Wisdom vii. 22) Who is so variously communicated to the children of men that "there is no one that can hide himself from His heat" (Ps. xviii. 7). For He is given to provide for our daily needs, He is given for the working of miracles, He is given for our salvation, He is given for our help, He is given for our comfort, He is given to excite us to fervour. With regard to the necessities of our daily life, the Spirit furnishes the common good things in the greatest plenty to both the just and the wicked, to the worthy and the unworthy alike, so that He seems in this matter to observe no

distinction between friends and enemies. He surely deserves to be considered an ingrate who does not acknowledge the bounty of the Holy Ghost even in such material benefits. The Spirit communicates Himself for the working of miracles in signs and prodigies and other supernatural operations which He effects by the hands of whomsoever He pleases, renewing the wonders of bygone times, so that the events of the present may confirm our belief as to those of the past. But inasmuch as many receive even the gift of miracles without profit to themselves, the Spirit is given us in a third grace unto salvation, when we return with our whole heart to the Lord our God. He is given for our help when in all our conflicts with the enemies of our salvation He "helpeth our infirmity" (Rom. viii. 26). And He is communicated for our consolation as often as He "giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God" (ibid. 16). He is given finally to fill us with fervour, when breathing with power upon the hearts of the perfect, He enkindles within them a strong fire of charity, so that they now begin not only to "glory in the hope of the glory of the sons of God" (Rom. v. 2), but to "glory also in tribulations" (ibid. 3), counting insult as honour, opprobrium as joy, contempt as exaltation. We have all, I think, received the Spirit unto salvation, but not to all has He been given unto fervour. In fact, only very few appear to be filled with this spirit of fervour, very few show any desire to obtain it. We are content with our own cramped littleness, and make no endeavour to rejoice in or at least to aspire to the liberty of spirit which that spirit confers. Let us pray, dearest brethren, that in us may be accomplished the days of Pentecost, the days of

remission, the days of exultation, the days of the true jubilee (Lev. xxv. 10). Let us pray that the Holy Spirit may always find us, as He found the disciples, assembled in the same place, not only by bodily presence, in virtue of our promised stability, but also by the union of hearts resulting from mutual charity, unto the praise and glory of the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ our Lord, "Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen" (Rom. ix. 5).

SERMON FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

On David and Goliath.

"And he chose five smooth stones out of the torrent, and put them into the shepherd's scrip, and he took a sling in his hand, and went forth against the Philistine."—1 Kings xvi. 40.

We are told, my brethren, in the First Book of Kings, how Goliath, a man of prodigious size, presuming on the greatness of his strength and the massiveness of his body, called out to the army of Israel, asking for some one to engage him in single combat. We are likewise told how the Lord aroused the spirit of a certain youth so that he could not endure to hear this base-born and uncircumcised Philistine insulting the camp of Israel and the soldiers of the Living God. We have watched, as it were, this young hero advancing with sling and stone against a mail-clad warrior, of gigantic stature, who was further defended with helmet and shield, and equipped with all the terror-inspiring weapons of war (1 Kings xvii.). If we had in us "any bowels of commiseration" (Phil. ii. 1) we could not have helped feeling apprehensive for him who thus offered himself to so unequal a conflict, nor could we have helped participating later on in the joy of his victory. We have applauded the magnanimity of the boy whose soul was consumed with zeal for the house of God (John ii. 17), who did not regard as irrelevant to himself the reproaches of them that reproached Him (Ps. lxviii. 10), but felt them as a personal injury and was deeply "concerned for the affliction of Joseph"

(Amos. vi. 6). We have wondered at the confidence he manifested, such as was not found in all Israel (Matt. viii. 10). And at last our joy at the victory bestowed upon him by heaven, and evidently achieved by divine power, has been great in proportion to the anxiety we experienced whilst watching the battle between the stripling armed with faith and the giant glorying in the consciousness of his own superior strength.

Now if we remember that, according to the Apostle's testimony, "the law is spiritual" (Rom. vii. 14) and has been "written for our learning" (Rom. xv. 4), not only to delight us with a history of external events as with the contemplation of a beautiful exterior surface, but also and more particularly to nourish our minds with the sweetness of its mystical signification as with the marrow of the corn: if we bear this in mind, we ought to consider who is typified by the mighty Goliath that, elated and inflated with the wind of his own vanity, presumes alone to defy the people of God, even after they have already entered the promised land and triumphed over innumerable enemies. It is my own opinion that this proud man may be viewed not unreasonably as a type of pride. For pride is the greatest of sins, to the assaults of which the people of God are more liable than are any others, and it singles out for attack those especially who seem to have overcome all the other vices. Here you have the reason why it challenges us religious to single combat, because, namely, it usually makes its appearance when the rest of our enemies have been routed. So the Philistines at that time were too much afraid to join battle with the conquering hosts of Israel and it was then that they placed all their confidence in the massive strength of Goliath. For

wherefore should pride attack the soul which has already succumbed to the assaults of envy, or of that tepidity whereof the Lord declares that it provokes Him to vomit (Apoc. iii. 16), or of sloth which causes the sluggard to be "pelted with the dung of oxen" (Ecclus. xxii. 2)? What motive for pride, I ask, or for "haughtiness of the eyes" (ibid. xxiii. 5) can *he* have who is so manifestly enslaved to the other vices that he knows himself to be reputed by all as a man of evil conscience? Who, in fine, would dare to enter the lists against this worst of vices, except one mighty in arm who in the power of his virtue had triumphed over the rest? Let the strong-handed David go forth to this conflict, because it will require a strong hand to subdue so powerful a foe. Let him who has already conquered the lion and the bear prepare now to do battle with Goliath (1 Kings xvii.).

Let him try, by all means, whether the armour of Saul can be of any use to him, that is to say, whether worldly wisdom or the traditions of the philosophers, or the surface meaning of Holy Scripture—which the Apostle calls the "killing letter" (2 Cor. iii. 6)—can afford him any protection: let him try, I say, if with such arms he can overcome pride, if by such means he can attain to humility. Let him make the trial, so that finding such accoutrements to be more a hindrance than a help, he may "cast his care upon the Lord" (Ps. liv. 23). Then, quite hopeless of gaining the victory by his own unaided powers, and armed with faith alone, let him not consider Goliath's enormous stature, lest perchance he should grow fearful of being crushed under his weight, but rather let him "sing with the spirit, let him sing also with the understanding" (1 Cor.

xiv. 15), and say, "The Lord is the Protector of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?" (Ps. xxvi. 1). So Peter also could neither perish nor fear whilst he paid no attention to the violence of the tempest or to the depth of the water, or to the weight of his body, but cast himself wholly upon the word of his Lord. But when he took notice that the wind was strong, he became alarmed, and under the weight of this fear began immediately to sink (Matt. xiv. 29, 30). King Saul endeavoured to inspire our youthful champion with the same fears. "Thou art not able," he said, "to withstand this Philistine, nor to fight against him: for thou art but a boy, and he is a warrior from his youth" (1 Kings xvii. 33). David, however, refused to entertain such thoughts; but putting all his trust in the power of Him by Whose help he had triumphed over other enemies, he went forth without fear to the conflict. Laying aside, therefore, the armour of Saul, "he chose five smooth stones out of the torrent" (ibid. 40), which being heavy could not be carried away by the water with all the light objects lying in its course, but could only be polished by the friction. The torrent, my brethern, signifies the present wicked world—and would to God "our soul had passed over that torrent" (Ps. cxxiii. 5)! Hence the Holy Scripture tells us that "one generation passeth away and another generation cometh" (Eccles. i. 4) just as one swelling wave pushes forward another. Consequently, since "all flesh is grass and all the glory thereof as the flower of the field" (Is. xl. 6), the force of this all-invading torrent will easily sweep away a thing so imponderable: "but the word of the Lord endureth for ever" (Is. xl. 8), withstanding immovably the might of the current.

It seems to me, therefore, that by the five stones taken from the torrent we may not unreasonably understand the fivefold word of the word of God, that is to say, the word of warning, the word of promise, the word of charity, the word of example, and the word which relates to prayer. Instances of these five words abound in the various books of Holy Scripture. And possibly it is to the same St. Paul is alluding where he writes, "I had rather speak five words with my understanding than ten thousand words in a tongue" (1 Cor. xiv. 19). "For the fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Cor. vii. 31), and according to another inspired author, "The world passeth away and the concupiscence thereof" (1 John ii. 17). But whilst the world fades and passes, our five words remain, and not only do they remain, but they take on a brighter polish from the friction of the passing hours; for "while many (generations) shall pass over, knowledge shall be multiplied" (Dan. xii. 4). Let our David, consequently, when preparing to encounter the spirit of pride, put his five stones, thus collected and smoothed, in the scrip of his memory, reflecting upon the awful menaces of God, upon the greatness of His promises, upon the proofs He has given us of His boundless charity, upon the manifold examples of holiness He has set before us, and upon His multiplied exhortations to us to "be instant in prayer" (Rom. xii. 12). Such, I say, are the stones which he must take with him, whosoever would enter into conflict with pride. And whenever this giant vice presumes to lift up its venomous head, he must use the first of them that comes to the hand of his thought, and smiting Goliath on the forehead, send him sprawling to the ground, covered with confu-

sion. But manifestly he will want a sling also to fight against such an enemy, that is to say, longanimity is a virtue which we can never dispense with, least of all when combating pride.

Therefore, my brother, as often as the temptation to vanity comes to knock at the door of thy mind, thou hast only to recall with heartfelt fear the terrible threats of God, or to reflect with ardent desire upon His infallible promises, and Goliath will be unable to endure the impact of either of these stones, but all his inflated bulk will immediately shrink to nothingness. But if the thought of that ineffable love which the Lord of Majesty has shown for thee happens to recur to thy mind, is it not certain that thou wilt begin to repudiate and utterly abominate the suggestion of vainglory? And if thou wilt ponder in diligent consideration the examples of the saints, this reflection also will doubtless prove very useful for curbing the swelling of pride. It may be, however, that in the sudden elation thy hand can take hold of none of the stones I have just mentioned. When this happens, thou must turn to the best account the one other stone that remains to thee: I mean to say, thou must apply thyself to prayer with all the fervour thou canst command. So shall the wicked one whom thou seest "highly exalted and lifted up like the cedars of Libanus" (Ps. xxxvi. 35) be immediately overthrown and brought to naught.

Perhaps, my brethren, you would like to know how we can make use of Goliath's sword to cut off the head of its owner? For such a deed would naturally give us as much pleasure as pain to our enemy. I will therefore inform you, but briefly, because I am addressing men who have experience of the spiritual warfare,

and who consequently can easily understand and quickly discern what they have often felt in their own interior. Whenever, then, at the first whisper of vanity, you turn your thoughts with shame and confusion to the divine threats or promises, or take up any of the other stones I have been describing, you have now, indeed, cast down Goliath, but you have not yet killed him. Approach nearer to him, therefore, lest he should rise again, and standing over his prostrate form, cut off his head with his own sword, destroying vanity by means of the very vanity wherewith you have been attacked. For if you make the feeling of elation that stirs within your mind a motive and a reason for greater humility, condemning yourselves as proud men, and becoming thereafter more humble and abject in your conceit of yourselves, then in truth Goliath has been slain with the sword of Goliath.

FIRST SERMON FOR THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

On the Three Days and the Seven Loaves.

"I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with Me three days and have nothing to eat."—Mark viii. 2.

"I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with Me three days and have nothing to eat." The Gospel, dearest brethren, has been written in order that it may be read; and we read it for no other object than that we may find in it motives for reasonable sorrow or reasonable joy. The men of this world feel a vain consolation in the abundance of material possessions and a grief just as vain in the want of them. But the Gospel is the mirror of truth: it flatters no man and deceives none. Each one of us sees himself reflected there just as he is; he will not be made to "tremble for fear where there is no fear" (Ps. xiii. 5), nor will he be encouraged to be "glad when he has done evil" (Prov. ii. 14). But "what saith the Scripture?" (Rom. iv. 3). "If a man be a hearer of the word and not a doer, he shall be compared to a man beholding his own countenance in a glass. For he beheld himself, and went his way, and presently forgot what manner of man he was" (James i. 23, 24). Do not, O my brethren, do not, I beseech you, permit this to be applied to yourselves. Rather let us examine ourselves closely by means of the passage we have just heard from the Holy Scrip-

ture, so that we may profit by the same, and correct whatever it shall reveal to us as requiring correction in our character or conduct. This is what the Prophet prayed for, saying to the Lord, "Oh, that my ways may be directed to keep Thy justifications!" And he immediately added, "Then shall I not be confounded when I shall look into all Thy commandments" (Ps. cxviii. 5, 6). As for myself, dearest brethren, I have no cause to be confounded on your account, but every reason to glory, because you have followed the Saviour into the desert (Matt. iv. 1), you have fearlessly "gone forth to Him without the camp" (Heb. xiii. 13). Nevertheless I feel somewhat apprehensive lest anyone of you should haply yield to discouragement during the three days of waiting and go back to the Egypt of this wicked world either in heart and desire, or even in body. Not without reason, therefore, does the Scripture call out to us, saying, "Expect the Lord, do manfully, and let thy heart take courage, and wait thou for the Lord" (Ps. xxvi. 14). "But how long," thou mayest ask, "am I to wait?" Doubtless, "until He have mercy on thee" (Ps. cxxii. 2). And if thou desirest to know when that will be, listen to what He says Himself, "I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with Me three days" (Mark viii. 2).

It is necessary, therefore, that thou shouldst advance three days' journey into the desert if thou wouldst offer to thy God a pleasing sacrifice (Exod. iii. 27); and if thou desirest to be filled with the miraculous loaves, thou must remain three days with thy Saviour. The first of these days is the day of fear, the day which clarifies and enlightens thy darkness, that is, the interior darkness of thy conscience, and at the same time

reveals to thy gaze the fearful chastisements of hell, the place of "the exterior darkness" (Matt. xxii. 13, xxv. 30). For, as we all know, it is the thought of hell that is wont to influence us in the first stages of our conversion to God. The second day is the day of mercy, wherein we find consolation in the memory of the divine compassions. And the third day I call the day of reason, because in it truth manifests itself to the mind in such a way that without any contradiction and as by natural right the rational creature subjects himself to the Creator, the servant becomes obedient to the voice of his Redeemer.* When we shall have arrived at this point we shall be made to sit down (John vi. 10) in order that charity may be "set in order in us" (Cant. ii. 4). Then the Lord will "open His hand and fill with blessing every living creature" (Ps. cxliv. 16). But inasmuch as Christ told His apostles to "make the men sit down" (John vi. 10), and since I—although

* Speaking of the same three days in the *Sententiae*, he says, "'Dying flies spoil the sweetness of the ointment' (Eccles. x. i). These dying flies are vanity, curiosity, and sensual pleasure. And forasmuch as they are wont to swarm in Egypt and about the Egyptian sacrifices, we cannot offer the sacrifice of justice and charity to the Lord our God in that country. We must therefore advance 'three days journey into the wilderness' (Exod. viii. 27), that is to say, into the solitude of the heart. On the first day the Bridegroom says to His Bride, 'I am come into My garden, O My sister, My spouse' (Cant. v. 1), that is, 'I am come into the garden of the virtues.' On the second day the Bride rejoices and exclaims, 'The King hath brought me into the cellar of wine' (Cant. ii. 4), that is, 'He hath unlocked for me the delightful secrets of the Scriptures.' The third day is spent in the nuptial chamber, the Bridegroom and Bride enjoying each other's company amidst the sweets of perfect mutual love. And note the contrariety: to vanity is opposed the solidity of the virtues; to curiosity, the varied delight resulting from the revelation of Scripture secrets; to worldly enjoyment, the nuptial couch of holy and divine love." —(Translator.)

to my great confusion—occupy, at least in some sense, the position of the apostles in your regard; therefore, dearest brethren, I invite you to seat yourselves, so that, being refreshed with the bread of benediction, you may not "faint in the way" (Mark viii. 3). Otherwise compelled by a most miserable necessity, you may have to go down into Egypt (Gen. xlii. 2), and there to endure the mockery of those who did not, like you, follow the Saviour to the desert. They themselves are indeed miserable enough, in that they refused to accompany you in "the exit from Egypt" (Ps. cxiii. 1); but obviously the most miserable of all men are those who, after participating in the weariness of the journey through the wilderness, have in the end no part in the refection.

Now, my brethren, if whilst the rest sat down as commanded, there were some who concealed themselves behind bushes or other sheltering objects, is it not manifest to all that these must remain hungry and empty? And the same is true of such as wander idly about, through levity or curiosity, instead of sitting down with the others; and also of such as sit down indeed, yet not in order nor with the rest. Therefore I exhort your charity and admonish you all and each with fatherly solicitude not to manifest any predilection for holes and corners, not to love the darkness nor to be looking about for hiding-places, for "every one that doth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light that his works may not be reproved" (John iii. 20). Neither let me find amongst you any of those who are "carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Ephes. iv. 14), who are unstable and restive, having nothing solid in them, nor anything serious, "but like the dust which

the wind driveth from the face of the earth" (Ps. i. 4). But what shall I say of those others whose "hand is against all men and all men's hands against them" (Gen. xvi. 12)? They are the men who dissociate themselves from their brethren, "sensual men, having not the Spirit" (Jude 19). For "no man, speaking by the Spirit of God, saith anathema to Jesus"* (1 Cor. xii. 3). Beyond question, this vice of singularity is one of the worst and most ruinous of pests, since by it the obstinacy of a single individual disturbs the peace of the entire community, becomes the cause of dissension to all and a fruitful source of scandal. Hear what the Prophet says, speaking of the vineyards of the Lord, "The singular wild beast," he wails, "hath devoured it" (Ps. lxxix. 14). Therefore, dearest brethren, I most earnestly beg and implore of you to shun all dissimulation and all the angularities of self-will. Shun also disquietude and the spirit of levity; shun obstinacy; and shun the most hateful vice of singularity, unless—which God forbid!—you desire to see your souls defrauded of the nourishment of the bread of benediction.

And now, dearest brethren, not to detain you any longer, the following are the seven spiritual loaves wherewith your souls ought to be nourished. The first loaf is the word of God, in which, as the Lord Himself bears witness, the life of man consists (Matt. iv. 4). The second loaf is obedience. Hence Christ said to His

* That is to say, such religious by turning aside from the common way and obstinately following their own will, condemn, by implication at least, both their brethren and their superiors with whom Christ identifies Himself: "He that despiseth you, despiseth Me" (Luke x. 16), and so says "anathema to Jesus."—(Translator.)

disciples, "My meat is to do the will of Him That sent Me" (John iv. 34). The third is holy meditation, whereof it is written, "Holy meditation will preserve thee,"* and in another place it seems to be called "the bread of life and understanding" (Ecclus. xv. 3). Then we have the "bread of tears" (Ps. lxxix. 6), and the bread of penitential toil. You will not be surprised, my brethren, that I speak of toil and tears as bread, unless perchance you have forgotten the words of the Psalmist, "How long wilt Thou feed us with the bread of tears?" and what he says in another place, "Thou shalt eat the labour of thy hands: blessed (therefore) art thou, and it shall be well with thee" (Ps. cxxvii. 2). The sixth of our loaves is the sweetness of brotherly concord, a loaf that is made from a multitude of different grains and leavened by the grace of God. The seventh and last is the Holy Eucharist, according to the words of Christ, "The bread that I will give is My Flesh for the life of the world" (John vi. 52).

* "Cogitatio sancta conservabit te." These words are not found in the Vulgate. Mabillon gives a reference to Proverbs iv. 6, but what we there read is something very different. "Dilige eam (sapientiam) et conservabit te," corresponding to the Greek "ἐράσθητι αὐτῆς καὶ τηρήσει σε."—Love her and she shall preserve thee.—(Translator.)

SECOND SERMON FOR THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

On the Sevenfold Mercy of God towards the Sinner.

"The mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever."—Ps. lxxxviii. 2.

"The mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever." Wherefore do I occasionally hear some silly thought making a murmur in my soul about the burden of our penitential life here, as if to cause that burden to press more heavily upon me? I am conscious of a burden of a different kind, sweeter indeed, but heavier far. For God has so laden me with His tender mercies, so encompassed and overwhelmed me with His benefits, that I am unable to feel any other burden. "What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that He hath rendered to me?" (Ps. cxv. 3). So much hath He given me and so much hath He rendered to me, and shall anyone speak to me of another burden? "My spirit within me swooneth away" (Ps. lxxvi. 4). Yes, it fainteth and swooneth away, whilst I ponder the mercies of the Lord, so great and so many. And although I have not the power to offer Him worthy thanks, I will nevertheless do what I can, for my soul abhors ingratitude. Ingratitude is a most pestilential vice, the destroyer of grace, and the enemy of salvation. I assure you, dearest brethren, that in my opinion there is nothing so displeasing to God, especially in the children of grace, and in those who have been converted from worldliness, as this vice of ingratitude.

It blocks up all the avenues of grace; and wheresoever it is found, thither grace cannot come, there it has no room. Hence "I have great sadness and continual sorrow in my heart" (Rom. ix. 2). For I see not a few so much inclined to levity, to laughter, and to sloth, and so ready to indulge in frivolous conversation that I am very uneasy lest, being too unmindful of God's mercy towards them and too little thankful for His multiplied benefits, they should at last be abandoned by grace for failing to honour it with the reverence due to grace.

But, brethren, what shall I say of the man who perseveres with obstinate mind in his murmuring and impatience? Or of him who repents of having cleaved close to God (Ps. lxxii. 28), and who now, with as much perversity as unreason performs every good work against the grain, who plainly not only makes no return of thanks for the mercies of the Lord, but rather requites them with insult? For he beyond a doubt dishonours—so far as it depends on him—the Master Who called him, whosoever continues in His service to harbour feelings of sadness and discontent*—I speak of course of that sadness which is according to the flesh and "worketh death" (2 Cor. vii. 10). Does it seem to you that such a one shall receive further grace, and not rather that "that also which he seemeth to have shall be taken away" (Matt. xxv. 29)? For may we not rightly regard as lost whatever has been given

* "Serve the Lord with a glad heart. Be no cheerless guest in this world of His. Put not thy Master to shame, but let men gather from thy countenance that thou hast taken service with One Who has said: 'My yoke is sweet and My burden light.'"—Pesch, *Christian Philosophy of Life*, p. 568 (English Translation).

to the ungrateful? And surely one repents of having given what one believes to have been lost? Consequently, whosoever desires that the gifts of grace shall remain and be multiplied in his soul ought to show himself devout and grateful to the Giver. There is no man indeed who will not, if he examines, discover abundant reasons for being grateful to God, because, as the Psalmist sings, "There is no one that can hide himself from His heat" (Ps. xviii. 7). But as for us whom He has called out of the world and chosen to serve Himself alone, if, according to the Apostle, "we have received not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit That is of God, that we may know the things that are given us from God" (1 Cor. ii. 12): we, my brethren, most particularly, shall find innumerable motives for offering unceasing thanks to the Lord. For is there a single individual amongst us who cannot sincerely say to Him with the Prophet, "Thy mercy is great towards me" (Ps. lxxxv. 13)? Therefore, from so great a multitude of divine mercies I will now single out a few and set them briefly before you, so that he who is wise may become wiser still when the occasion is given (Prov. ix. 9).

Now, I see in my own case seven mercies of the Lord, which you likewise, I think, can easily discover in yourselves by looking into your conscience. The first is that He preserved me from many sins whilst I yet lived in the world; the first, I mean, of the seven I am speaking about, not of all that the divine goodness has bestowed upon me. For who does not perceive that, many as are the sins into which I fell, I should have fallen into many more had I not been restrained by the mercy of the Almighty? I freely acknowledge

and will ever acknowledge that "unless the Lord had been my helper, my soul in a little would have been" * (Ps. xciii. 17) guilty of every species of crime.† Oh, what patience and goodness did He manifest in thus preserving by His grace one so thankless and unappreciative, in most kindly protecting one so refractory and so arrogant from the innumerable other sins which I should have committed! But where shall I find words to describe the second of Thy mercies towards me, O Lord my God, to tell how kind it was, how generous, how gratuitous? I sinned against Thee, and Thou didst dissemble; I refrained not from crime, and Thou didst refrain from punishment; I persevered for long in my iniquity, and Thou, O Lord, Thou didst persevere for as long in showing me mercy. But of what avail would Thy long-suffering have been unless it were followed by the grace of repentance? It would have only served to render my damnation more complete and utter, wert Thou obliged to say at the last, "These things hast thou done and I was silent" (Ps. xlix. 21).

Therefore the third of God's mercies to me was that He visited and changed my heart, so that what had been sweet to it before was now rendered bitter, and I who used to be "glad when I had done evil and to rejoice in most wicked things" (Prov. ii. 14), began at length "to recount to Him all my years in the bitterness of my soul" (Is. xxxviii. 15). And now, O Lord, "Thou hast moved

* "Nisi quia Dominus adjuvit me paulominus habitasset in inferno anima mea." As Bellarmin clearly proves, the word "paulominus" must be understood here as "paulo post," and therefore translated not by "almost," as in the Douay Version, but by "soon" or "in a little."—(Translator.)

† "There is no sin committed by any man which any other man might not also commit unless prevented by God's grace and providence."—St. Augustine, Homil. liii.

the earth—of my heart—and hast troubled it": therefore "heal Thou the breaches thereof, for it has been moved" (Ps. lix. 4). There are many who are led to repent of their sins, but without any profit, because their very repentance is as displeasing to God as was their former disobedience. It was consequently a further mercy on the part of the Lord that He compassionately received me when I returned to Him, and placed me in the number of those of whom the Psalmist sings, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered" (Ps. xxxi. 1).

The fifth mercy is that by which He gave me strength to abstain from sin in future and to live more purely, lest I should fall back into my old evil ways and my "last state be made worse than the first" (Matt. xii. 45). For manifestly no human strength, but Thy power alone, O Lord my God, is able to remove from our necks the yoke of sin, once we have voluntarily submitted to it: because "whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John viii. 34), and cannot be delivered from that thraldom except by "Thy strong hand and stretched-out arm" (Deut. v. 15). But now when I have been emancipated from the power of evil by these five mercies, Thou givest me the grace of well-doing in two others, so that the words of the Prophet may be fulfilled, "Decline from evil and do good" (Ps. xxxvi. 27). These last two mercies are the grace of acquiring merits, the grace, that is, by which Thou enablest me to live a virtuous life; and the grace to hope for an eternal reward, whereby Thou encouragest an unworthy and sinful man to presume so far on Thy oft-proved generosity as to look forward to the enjoyment of celestial bliss.

THIRD SERMON FOR THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

On the Fragments of the Seven Mystical Loaves.

"Gather up the fragments that remain lest they be lost."
—John vi. 12.

"Know you what I have done to you" (John xiii. 12), brethren, in proposing for your consideration this morning the seven mercies of God? * I have divided amongst you the seven loaves of the Gospel (Matt. xv. 36). For if "my tears have been my bread day and night" (Ps. xli. 4), how much more the mercies of the Lord, which are far sweeter to the taste, which afford better nourishment, and more fully "strengthen the heart of man" (Ps. ciii. 15)? But, if I mistake not, many morsels of these loaves fell from our hands to-day. For I myself whilst hastily dividing the bread was conscious of numerous fragments escaping from my hold and slipping through my fingers. Whether or not you gathered up for yourselves any of these fragments, you best can tell. As for me, I will ungrudgingly share with you—if you are not already too weary—the few crumbs which I have been able to collect, lest otherwise I should incur the malediction pronounced against him "that hideth up corn among the people" (Prov. xi. 26). Well, then, the first of the seven loaves, if I remember aright, was the guardianship of grace, which, in spite of all my unworthiness, preserved me from a

* From this it is evident that the Saint sometimes preached two sermons on the same day.—(Translator.)

multitude of sins whilst I still lived in the world. Of this loaf I have gathered up three fragments, very pleasing to the spiritual palate and very nourishing to the life of the soul. For in three ways, as I can recall, I was preserved from sin: by the removal of occasions, by the communication of the strength to resist, and by the extinction of evil desires. I should, no doubt, have easily fallen into many sins if only the occasion had offered. But by the mercy of God the opportunity did not present itself. Many times, too, I should have fallen under stress of violent temptation had not the Lord and King of virtues (Ps. xxiii. 10) given me the virtue to resist (Ps. xxiii. 10), so that my "lust might be under me" (Gen. iv. 7), and that I might not consent to the emotions which I could not help feeling. From some kinds of sin, also, Thy mercy, O Lord, kept me at so great a distance that the mere thought of them inspired me with horror, and no temptation to commit them ever troubled my heart.

The second loaf was the divine long-suffering by which the Lord delayed to take vengeance because He was thinking thoughts of pardon (Jer. xxix. 11). Of this loaf likewise let me offer you three fragments: the thought of the patience which He showed, of the election of His predestination which He desired should be fulfilled, and of "His exceeding charity wherewith He loved us" (Ephes. ii. 4). Here, my brethren, you have the reason why the Lord "with expectation awaited me and was attentive to me" (Ps. xxxix. 2), but "turned away His face from my sins" (Ps. l. 2), as if He were unwilling to see how great a transgressor I was. Here, I say, you have the reason why He overlooked my offences: because He wished to commend

His patience, to accomplish His election, and to give proof of His love.

I now come to the third loaf, the mercy, that is, through which I was converted to penance. And of this also I have three fragments, or rather three crumbs, to set before you. For at that time the Lord struck my heart and aroused it, so that it might become conscious of the wounds inflicted upon it by sin and might feel the pain of these wounds. At the same time He filled me with wholesome terror, bringing me down to the gates of hell (Is. xxxviii. 10) and showing me the torments prepared for the impious. And then, in order to wean me away entirely from the love of guilty pleasure, He replenished my soul with a sweeter consolation by inspiring me with the hope of pardon. It was to these three graces I owed my conversion; and what I say of myself, I think I can also say of each of you.

With regard to the fourth loaf, or the grace of forgiveness, I beseech you, dearest brethren, to carefully "gather up the fragments lest they be lost" (John vi. 12). For they are very wholesome "and sweeter than honey and the honey-comb" (Ps. xviii. 11). So completely did the Lord pardon my transgressions, so generously did He condone all the injuries I had done Him that He now neither punishes me from vengeance, nor confounds me with reproaches; nay, not even does He so far impute to me my past offences as to love me the less on account of them. Amongst men you will find some who so far pardon such as injure them that they do not seek to avenge their wrongs, yet they often upbraid their enemies. There are others who, although they do not speak of the injuries they have suffered, nevertheless are far from forgetting them:

they brood over them in the depths of their soul and foster resentment in their hearts. In neither of these cases is there full forgiveness. Very different from the hardness of men is the loving-kind nature of God. *He* acts with generosity and pardons without reserve in such a manner that—for the consolation of repentant sinners—" where sin abounded grace is accustomed to abound the more " (Rom. v. 20). We have proof of this in the example of St. Paul himself, the Doctor of nations, who, with the help of divine grace, persecutor though he had been, " laboured more abundantly " than all the other apostles (1 Cor. xv. 10). Witness also St. Matthew, who was called to the apostolate from " the receipt of the custom " (Mark ii. 14), and who was privileged to be the writer of the first Gospel. Witness St. Peter, to whom, after his triple denial of his Lord, the pastoral care of the universal Church was committed. And witness finally that notorious sinner, who at the very beginning of her conversion was filled with so great a fire of charity and afterwards honoured with so great a grace of holy familiarity with her Lord. Against whose accusations was Magdalen ever obliged to defend herself? If the Pharisee murmurs (Luke vii. 39), if Martha complains (Luke x. 40), if the apostles are scandalised (Matt. xxvi. 8), Mary holds her peace and Jesus Himself justifies and even applauds her. And then how precious a prerogative it was for her and how great a glory that she was accounted worthy to be the first to see Him after His resurrection from the dead!

But let us now pass on to the fragments of the other loaves. " It is good for us to be here " (Matt. xvii. 4), no doubt, where so much confidence is given to sinners;

but there are other matters remaining whereof it is necessary to speak. The fifth of our loaves, therefore, is the grace of abstinence from sin. Of this loaf, likewise, I have collected three fragments, by reason of which I can truly say, "He that is mighty hath done great things to me" (Luke i. 49). Perhaps you, my brethren, look upon your preservation from sin as a grace of little importance? But not so do I esteem it. For I know what enemies it has to encounter and how much strength it must possess in order to resist them successfully. The first enemy of our abstinence or continence is the flesh, which "lusteth against the spirit" (Gal. v. 17). See how domestic an enemy we have here! how perilous a combat! how intestine a war! A most cruel antagonist is the flesh, O my soul, which we can neither flee nor put to flight: we have to bear it about with us everywhere, because it is firmly bound to us. And what adds to the danger and the misery, we are ourselves obliged to support and forbidden to destroy our enemy. See, then, brethren, how watchfully we must guard ourselves against a foe that dwells in our very bosom. But the flesh is not my only adversary: I have another—an adversary that encompasses and assails me on every side. If you know not what I mean, let me inform you that I am alluding to "this present wicked world" (Gal. i. 4). This enemy "hath shut up my ways" (Lam. iii. 9), and through the five gates of the soul, that is, through the five bodily senses, he wounds me with his arrows, and death enters in by my windows (Jer. ix. 21). These two adversaries would certainly be enough for me, yet behold I perceive a strong wind coming from the north (Ezech. 1. 4) whence proceeds all manner of evil (Is. xiv.

13). Alas! alas! what resource remains to me now but to cry out like the apostles, "Lord, save us: we perish" (Matt. viii. 25)? For behold "the hammer of the whole earth" (Jer. l. 23)! Behold "the serpent, more subtle than any of the beasts of the earth" (Gen. iii. 1)! Behold the enemy whom I cannot even see, much less guard against! For the wrestling of those who desire to keep themselves continent—continent, I mean, not alone from carnal pleasures, but also, as is meet, from all other sins and vices—their "wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places" (Ephes. vi. 12). Oh, who shall be able to "extinguish all the fiery darts of these most wicked ones" (ibid. 16) who "have prepared their arrows in the quiver to shoot in the dark the upright of heart" (Ps. x. 3), yea, and "have talked of hiding snares and have said: Who shall see them?" (Ps. lxiii. 6)! At one time they persecute and attack us with open violence, at another with secret treachery, but always with malice and cruelty. And which of us is strong enough to sustain, not to speak of beating back, such multiplied assaults? I think you now understand in some degree the difficulty of abstinence from sin, so that, according to the Apostle's counsel, you may know the things that are given you from God" (1 Cor. ii. 12). For beyond a doubt it is only "through God we can do mightily"—with regard to this virtue in particular—"and it is He Who bringeth to naught them that afflict us" (Ps. lix. 14); He it is Who enables us to trample under our feet not alone the flesh with its concupiscences, but "this present wicked world" also, with

its vanity and curiosity, yea, and even Satan himself with his temptations and wiles. Was I not, therefore, well warranted in affirming that we shall find in such abstinence good reason to exclaim, "He that is mighty hath done great things to me"?

Let me now offer you, my brethren, the fragments of the sixth loaf. This loaf, if you remember, is the grace of acquiring merits, of accumulating the riches of eternal life. Now it seems to me that such grace consists in three things especially, viz., the hatred of past sins, the contempt of the goods of the present life, and the longing after those of the future. The seventh loaf and the last is the hope of attaining to these future and everlasting goods, and of this also I possess three fragments the taste whereof is wonderfully "sweet to my palate" (Cant. ii. 3). There are three things, I say, which so fortify and strengthen my heart that no poverty of merit, no consideration of my own worthlessness, no estimate of the bliss of heaven, can cast it down from the height of hope whereon it is firmly established. Do you wish me to set these fragments before you now or would you prefer that I should keep them for another occasion, according to what is written, "Thou hast found honey: eat what is sufficient for thee" (Prov. xxv. 16)? You would rather have them now? Well, well. Thus is accomplished day by day what Wisdom foretold of herself, "They that eat me shall yet hunger and they that drink me shall yet thirst" (Ecclus. xxiv. 29): and that is what I now see fulfilled in you. Therefore I will not further exercise your patience, neither will I any longer defraud your appetite, which I perceive to be as eager now as if you had not as yet tasted anything. There are, then, three things upon

which all my hope is founded. These are: the charity whereby God has made me His adoptive son, the truth of His promises, and His power to fulfil them. Let my foolish reason murmur as much as it likes, saying, "Who art thou that aspirest to glory so great? And by what merits dost thou hope to obtain it?" I answer with confidence, "I know Whom I have believed, and I am certain" (2 Tim. i. 12) that He has adopted me out of excessive charity, that He is faithful to fulfil what He has promised, and that He possesses the power required for this fulfilment. For it is lawful for Him to do what He wills (Matt. xx. 15). This, my brethren, is "a threefold cord that is not easily broken" (Eccles. iv. 12), let down to us in this prison, out of heaven, our native land. Let us, I beseech you, take firm hold of it, so that it may lift us up and draw us on high even to "the sight of the glory of the Most High God" (Tob. iii. 24), Who is blessed for evermore. Amen.

FIRST SERMON FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY IN NOVEMBER.

On the Two Visions of God.

"I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and elevated, and all the earth was filled with His majesty."—Is. vi. 1, 3.
"We have seen Him and there is no beauty in Him nor omeliness."—Is. liii. 2.

"I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and elevated and all the earth was filled with His majesty." Here, my brethren, the Prophet describes for us a very sublime vision. "I saw the Lord sitting," he says. A most wonderful spectacle, surely, and blessed are the eyes that have seen it. Who does not long with all the ardour of desire to contemplate the glory of a Majesty so great? This, indeed, has always been the one object of the aspirations of the saints. For it is the vision of Him "on Whom the angels desire to look" (1 Peter i. 12), Whom to see is life eternal (John xvii. 3). But I have read of another vision of the same Lord, very different in character, and vouchsafed to the same Prophet. The same Isaias with whose words I began speaks thus on another occasion, "We have seen Him and there is no beauty in Him nor comeliness . . . and we have thought Him as it were a leper and as one struck by God and afflicted" (Is. liii. 2-4). Hereupon it is necessary to observe in the first place that this latter vision seems to be common to many, whilst the former is the special privilege of the

Prophet. For why should he speak of the one in the plural number—"we have seen"—and of the other in the singular—"I saw"—unless he designed to insinuate such a distinction: that whereas the vision of the Lord's humility is accorded to many, the vision of His glory is the Prophet's exclusive privilege? King Herod saw Him without "beauty or comeliness" and therefore "set Him at naught" (Luke xxiii. 11). The Jews also saw Him thus, they who "numbered all His bones" (Ps. xxi. 18). But evidently it is with reference, not to this, but to the vision of His majesty that the Prophet cries out "Let the impious one be taken away that he may not see the glory of God" (Is. xxvi. 10, juxta LXX).

Therefore God not only "spoke by the prophets at sundry times and in divers manners" (Heb. i. 1), but He also appeared to the prophets. Thus David beheld and recognised Him "a little less than the angels" (Ps. viii. 6); Jeremias saw Him upon earth conversing with men (Bar. iii. 38)*; according to the testimony of Isaias, He showed Himself to him at one time "seated upon a throne high and elevated," at another, not only as inferior to the angels, but even as a man amongst men, yea, as a leper: that is, not alone in the flesh, but "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. viii. 3). You also, my brethren, if you wish to contemplate the glory of the Lord, ought first to gaze upon the humility of Jesus. Look first upon the Serpent lifted up in the desert (Num. xxi. 9, 1 John iii. 14), if

* The Book of Baruch is often quoted by the Fathers as the work of Jeremias because it contains the Epistle of the latter Prophet, whose friend and disciple Baruch is said to have been. —(Translator.)

you desire to see the King exalted on His throne.* Let the former vision humble you in order that the latter may raise you up from your humiliation. Let the one repress and heal your swelling pride so that the other may fill and satiate your appetite. Do you behold the Lord Jesus emptied (Phil. ii. 7)? Be careful not to repute that an unprofitable vision, since the vision of Him enthroned cannot be otherwise than profitable. You shall be like to Him hereafter, when you shall see Him as He is (1 John iii. 2): therefore be like to Him now also whilst you see Him as He has made Himself for your sakes. For if you refuse not to resemble Him, even in His humiliation, you have acquired the right to resemble Him in His glory as well. He certainly will never suffer the partners of His sorrow to be excluded from a participation in His triumph. So far indeed is He from disowning His companions in suffering and refusing to admit them with Himself into His kingdom that even the robber who confessed Him on the cross was with Him in paradise that very day (Luke xxiii. 43). Hence He said to His apostles, "You are they who have continued with Me in My temptations, and I dispose to you, as My Father hath disposed to Me, a Kingdom" (Luke xxii. 28, 29). Since, therefore, "if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him" (2 Tim. ii. 12), let us make "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor. ii. 2) the subject of our daily meditation whilst we live here below. Let us put Him as a seal upon our heart, as a seal upon our arm (Cant. viii. 6); let us embrace Him with the arms,

* For the different points of analogy between Christ crucified and the Brazen Serpent, cf. A Lapide on John iii. 14—(Translator.)

so to speak, of fervent love; let us walk in His footsteps by leading a life of ardent piety. For this is the way by which, even to us, He will show Himself, Who is the salvation of God (Ps. xlix. 23), will show Himself, I repeat, no longer without beauty and comeliness (Is. liii. 2), but with glory so great that "the whole earth shall be filled with His Majesty" (Ps. lxxi. 19).

Very properly indeed does He allow Himself to be seen in the first vision, not elevated on His throne, but placed in a lower and humbler position. In every great house it is the custom to have two suites of living rooms, one above for the summer season, and the other below for the winter. Therefore, whilst the hearts of even the apostles were still congealed by the wintry frost, and whilst Peter himself, with his soul as chilled as his body, was trying to warm himself at the "fire of coals" (John xviii. 18), it was then surely no time for dwelling or rather for appearing aloft. But when shall be sung the new canticle (Ps. cxliii. 9, Apoc. v. 9, xiv. 3): "Winter is now past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers have appeared in our land" (Cant. ii. 11, 12), that will be the proper hour for the Lord to occupy His more elevated seat and to reign on high.

You may therefore suppose, dearest brethren, that when Isaias uttered the words of my text he had seen with prophetic eye the glory which belongs to that future day. "I saw," he said, "the Lord sitting upon a throne high and elevated, and the whole earth was filled with His majesty." But how are we to conceive that throne? Or what is its nature? It must obviously be understood in a spiritual sense, since the Most High sitteth not upon visible thrones any more than He "dwelleth in temples made with hands" (Acts xvii.

24). No kind of material substance would be suitable for such a seat, noble enough for such a structure, worthy of such an Occupant. With "living stones" (1 Peter ii. 5) must be built up the spiritual fabric which is to be honoured with the presence of Him Who is the true and eternal life. But if the angelic creation, reduced as it is by the fall of the apostate legions, be insufficient for so great a structure, let Him vouchsafe to "raise up the needy from the earth and to lift up the poor from the dunghill, that he may sit with princes and complete the throne of glory" (1 Kings ii. 8). And perhaps the reason why the Prophet who saw that throne described it, not only as "high," but as "elevated," was this: in order to designate the firm, because natural, sublimity of the angels and the merciful elevation of men. The words which follow in our text require to be carefully considered; so, let it suffice for to-day to have made a beginning.

SECOND SERMON FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY IN NOVEMBER.

That None save Those who are Subject to God shall be Admitted to His Temple.

"And those things that were under Him filled the Temple."—Is. vi. 1.

"All the earth," says our Prophet, speaking of Him Whom he saw sitting upon the throne, "all the earth was filled with His Majesty." "May Thy kingdom come" (Matt. vi. 10), O Lord, so that Thy glory may fill all things on earth as it does in heaven! For wherefore does "the prince of this world" (John xiv. 30) rage at large with such unbridled fury unless because meanwhile the earth has been given over into the hands of the impious one? "But this is his hour and the power of darkness" (Luke xxii. 53). The time will come when he who lost his place in heaven shall be miserably banished from the face of the earth also, and confined evermore in the subterranean caverns of hell. Hence the Prophet David, after describing the happiness of the saints, contrasts with them the wicked one and his angels or members, and says, "Not so the wicked, not so, but (they shall be) like the dust which the wind driveth from the face of the earth" (Ps. i. 4). Then the devil shall no longer have any power to tempt us, any liberty to trouble us, any possibility of working us harm. "All the earth shall be filled with the majesty of the Lord" when His will shall no more be

disobeyed, but more especially then when "the creature itself shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption" * on account of which it "groaneth and travaileth in pain even till now" (Rom. viii. 21, 2). For there shall be "a new heaven and a new earth" (Apoc. xxi. 1), and to whatever side we may choose to turn our gaze, we shall behold the face of all things resplendent, in a manner, with the glory of God.

But, my brethren, there is another earth (if I may call it so) nearer to us than this whereon we walk—I mean the earth of our own bodies—with regard to which we have a greater and a more reasonable solicitude. "For no man ever hated his own flesh" (Ephes. v. 29). Console your flesh, therefore, so that it also "shall rest in hope" (Ps. xv. 9), on hearing that all the earth shall be filled with the majesty of the Lord. For at the present time, how could our bodies be filled with the divine majesty, since even the great St. Paul, having as yet only "the first fruits of the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 23), groans under the weight of his misery and cries out, "I know that there dwelleth not in me, that is to say, in my flesh, that which is good" (ibid. vii. 18)? And certainly sin was not reigning in his mortal body (ibid. vi. 12) at the time when he spoke thus. But remark further how he calls his body a *mortal* body and only denies that sin has *dominion* over it. For even then "the law of sin" *dwelt* in his members (ibid. vii. 23), which, however, was to be entirely excluded as soon as the fulness of glory should appear. And not alone the law of sin, but even death itself, the last of our enemies, shall then be destroyed (1 Cor. xv. 26). Consequently all our earth shall be filled with

* That is to say, after the General Resurrection.—(Translator.)

the glory of the Lord when we shall be fully delivered from both the consciousness of sin and the penalty of death. All our earth, I repeat, shall be filled with the glory of the Lord, when it shall be clothed with the beauty of a glorious resurrection, when it shall put on the stole of immortality, when it shall be "made like to the Body of the glory" of Christ (Phil. iii. 21). For "we look for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who will reform the body of our lowness, made like to the Body of His glory" (ibid. 20, 21). Wherefore, then, O my flesh, dost thou any longer complain? Wherefore dost thou strive and lust against the spirit" (Gal. v. 17)? For if the spirit humbles thee, if it chastises thee, and brings thee into subjection (1 Cor. ix. 27), it does so undoubtedly quite as much for thy advantage and peculiar glory as for its own. What reason hast thou to envy them who are not ashamed to borrow an ignoble glory from the work of worms and the skins of mice, disgracing instead of adorning themselves by an art unworthy of man and disallowed even to women? Leave such to be the reformers, or rather the deformers of their own bodies; but as for thee, thou shall be reformed by the same Artificer by Whom thou hast been formed, provided thou art found a "body of lowness." If thou art wise, thou wilt wait to be refashioned by the hand that made thee.*

But now, my brethren, attend to what follows in the account of the Prophet's vision. "And those things which were under Him," says he, "filled the temple" (Is. vi. 1). This, no doubt, is the reason why the Apostle Peter admonishes you to "be humbled under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you

* Cf. the Sixth Sermon for the Season of Advent.

in the time of visitation" (1 Peter v. 6). See to it, therefore, that you be found under Him, for otherwise you cannot be with Him. What? Does it seem likely that He will admit all men indiscriminately into His temple of eternal beatitude, in which He did not suffer even all the angels indiscriminately to remain? Or do you imagine that He who discriminated between the stars of heaven will not likewise discriminate between the clods of earth? Yea, most assuredly will He, Who tested and rejected the gold, test also the silver. Therefore, what perfection, think you, must those men possess who shall succeed to the thrones of the repudiated angels? Surely they must be free from every kind of iniquity, but most especially from that which in the very angels themselves was found, not unto a light offence, not unto a feeling of momentary indignation, but unto hatred everlasting (Ps. xxxv. 3). Pride once appeared in the city of God; it disturbed its tranquillity, shook its walls, aye, and threw them down in part, and in no small part. What then? Shall that devastating vice, think you, be readily re-admitted? How can the heavenly Jerusalem do otherwise than hate and utterly abominate a vice so pestilential? Be sure, dearest brethren, that He who did not spare the proud angels will as little spare proud men. There is no contrariety in Him, "God is not a respecter of persons" (Acts x. 34); His judgments are never inconsistent with each other. Nothing can give Him pleasure, whether in angels or in men, save humility alone; and He Who sitteth upon the throne selects for the filling of His temple only such as are subject to Him. Hence it is written, "Who is as the Lord our God Who dwelleth on high and looketh down on

the low things in heaven and on earth?" (Ps. cxii. 5). But consider whether we may not perhaps take this to be the battle-cry of the Archangel Michael, "resisting to the face" (Gal. ii. 11) the spirit of pride who said, "I will be like the Most High" (Is. xiv. 14). For the name Michael is said to mean, "Who is like to God?".

The Prophet, therefore, after telling us how he "saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and elevated," lest we should be tempted to understand the height of him who boasted, "I will ascend above the height of the clouds" (Is. xiv. 14), or to refer the elevation to those men who lift themselves up in pride, very wisely added, "and those things which were under Him filled the temple." For in these words is plainly implied, not any commendation of that "height that exalteth itself against God" (2 Cor. x. 5), but the fact that they alone shall be chosen for His temple or for His throne who are subject to Him, some of them exalted by the firm stability of their spiritual nature, others elevated from the earth by the divine compassion. But lest it should be objected here that all things are subject to His sway, and that the words, "those things which were under Him," ought to be understood without any limitation, the Prophet makes mention of the Seraphim, to show that God commends and approves not every kind of subjection, but only the subjection which is voluntary and proceeds from the fervour of charity. As touching the Seraphim, I purpose to communicate to you in the proper place whatever light the Lord has been pleased to favour me with concerning them.

"And those things which were under Him filled the

temple." In the beginning, my brethern, God created the angels in order that they might constitute the whole of His blessed temple. "But with many of them God was not well pleased" (1 Cor. x. 5), because even "in His angels He found wickedness" (Job iv. 18). Yes, there was wickedness in him who said, "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will sit in the mountain of the covenant, in the sides of the north" (Is. xiv. 13); and he found many to join him in his revolt. Unhappy spirit that would rather be separated from God than subject to God! Unhappy they also who, when they saw the thief "did run with him" (Ps. xlix. 18)! Accordingly, these apostate angels were cast forth and left their places vacant for others to fill. Then, "shalt not thou, O my soul, be subject to God" (Ps. lxi. 2)? Otherwise thou too shalt have no room in His temple, because the Prophet tells thee that "those things which were under Him filled the temple." Vainly shall the foolish virgins knock, in vain shall they cry aloud (Matt. xxv. 11) when "the marriage is filled with guests" (Matt. xxii. 10) and the door shut. Most miserable the soul that shall deserve to be excluded from that marriage feast! Most unhappy he who shall hear it said with reference to himself, "Away with the wicked one that he may not see the glory of God" (Is. xxvi. 10). What advantage can it be to have beheld the light of this world for the miserable one who shall not have merited to contemplate that immortal glory? Would to God that mine eyes had never gazed on anything at all if, forbid it, kind heaven!—they are destined to be defrauded of that glorious vision! Therefore, let the children of pride go if they please and show themselves

more arrogant than ever; let them be lifted up and inflated with vanity; let them be always striving to appear protruding beyond the level, so that when the straight line of equity comes to be drawn, they may be cast forth from the fulness. But as for thee, O my soul, take care not to follow their evil example, but rather be thou subject to God (Ps. lxi. 2), subject from the heart, subject from the fervour of devotion: because it is only the Seraphim, that is, those inflamed with charity, that were seen standing upon His throne. Let us stand there with them to-day, dearest brethren, and let us not suffer ourselves to be removed from that temple of God in which "all shall sing His glory" (Ps. xxviii. 9), because they shall there contemplate the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

THIRD SERMON FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY IN NOVEMBER.

On the Different Kinds of Seraphim.

"*And upon it stood the Seraphim.*"—Is. vi. 2.*

I do not suppose you have forgotten that the sermon to-day is to be on the Seraphim, of whom the Prophet Isaias speaks, when, after testifying that he saw the Lord sitting upon the throne, he added, "Upon it stood the Seraphim." The name "Seraphim," as you have often heard, dearest brethren, designates one of the nine choirs of heavenly spirits, and indeed the noblest and highest of all. However, it seems to me to be used in this place in quite a different signification, especially because the Seraphim are here represented as but two in number, whereas we know that the heavenly Seraphim are exceedingly many. And if it be lawful for "every man to abound in his own sense" (Rom. xiv. 5) in this matter, I would recognise in these two Seraphim the two kinds of intelligent creatures, the angelic, namely, and the human. Do not be surprised to hear me declare that man has been made a Seraph: remember that the Creator and Lord of the Seraphim has been made man. To thy confusion, O proud spirit, who, created amongst the angels, wast not found worthy to stand amongst the angels, to thy confusion, behold our King has come down to fashion new angels from the

* The Greek has for this: "καὶ Σεραφὶμ εἱστήκεισαν κυκλῳ αὐτοῦ"—"And the Seraphim stood around Him."—(Translator.)

earth. And that thou mayest be the more consumed with envy and the more tormented with jealous fury, it is not any ordinary angels He has descended to fashion, or angels of any of the lower choirs, but Seraphim. For listen to what He has said Himself: "I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?" (Luke xii. 49). He desires, therefore, to form Seraphim, and to make them stand in the place from which thou hast fallen. "Upon it stood the Seraphim," says the Prophet. Why then didst not thou, "O Lucifer, who didst rise in the morning" (Is. xiv. 12), why didst thou not "stand in the truth" (John viii. 44), unless it was that thou wast not really a Seraph at all? For the name "Seraphim" signifies something ardent or burning. Thou, O wretched one, didst possess light enough, but heat thou hadst none. How much better would it have been for thee hadst thou made thyself a fire-bearer (ignifer) rather than a light-bearer (lucifer), and hadst not, through an excessive desire of shining, as thou wast so cold thyself, chosen also the region of cold? "I will exalt my throne," thou saidst, "above the stars of God, I will sit in the mountain of the covenant, in the sides of the north, I will ascend above the height of the clouds" (Is. xiv. 13, 14). Why so much haste, O Lucifer, to "rise in the morning"? Wherefore wouldst thou glory above the stars which thou seemest to surpass in the brightness of thy splendour? Thy glorying will be short-lived. For thou shalt be quickly followed by that Sun of justice which thou, with foolish simulation, boastest to be thyself, and, overtaken by His light and heat, thou shalt be utterly annihilated and be seen no more in the heavens. Vainly also dost thou

design in the "man of sin" whom thou shalt assume * to anticipate the Lord when He shall make His second advent, at the end of the world, as the rising of the true Sun of justice, and to be "lifted up above all that is called God or that is worshipped": vainly, I repeat, because then, as at the beginning, He "shall destroy thee with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess. ii. 3, 4, 8).

How much wiser and happier was the holy Baptist! For he too was a lucifer, not by his own presumption, however, lest he like thee should be condemned as a thief and a robber, but by the authority of God the Father, Who appointed him Precursor of the Lord. "Behold," He says by his Prophet, "I send My angel before Thy face who shall prepare Thy way before Thee" (Luke vii. 27, Mal. iii. 1). There is another allusion to the Baptist's office in the Psalms, "I have prepared a lamp for My Anointed" (Ps. cxxxi. 17). For John was indeed a lamp, "a burning and a shining light" (John v. 35), and the Jews "were willing for a while to rejoice in his light" (ibid.), yet not the Baptist himself. Do you inquire the reason? "Ask himself, let him speak for himself" (John ix. 21). "The friend of the Bridegroom," he answers, "standeth and rejoiceth with joy—not in himself but—because of the Bridegroom's voice" (John iii. 29). John therefore stands:

* This assumption is not to be understood as a real incarnation of Lucifer, corresponding to the incarnation of Christ, because no created power is capable of effecting an hypostatic union. The holy Preacher only means that the devil will use Anti-Christ as his most special agent and instrument, and will endeavour to get him accepted as the Messias. Some of the Fathers, however, appear to have considered Antichrist the demon incarnate. Cf. A Lapide on 2 Thess. ii. 3, 9. As to whether the "man of sin" is to be regarded as a moral or a physical personality, cf. vol. i. p. 172, note.—(Translator.)

he is not like a reed that is shaken by the wind (Matt. xi. 7). He stands because he is a friend, he stands because he burns: just as the Seraphim also are represented as standing. He is in truth "the friend of the Bridegroom" who envieth not the glory of "the Bridegroom coming out of his bride-chamber" (Ps. xviii. 6), but prepares His path and proclaims His grace, so that he himself may be found worthy to receive of His fulness (John i. 16). And John therefore shines: he shines the more brightly the more intensely he burns, and he shines the more truly in proportion as he the less desires to shine. Faithful lucifer, who comes not to emulate the Sun of justice but rather to herald His glory! "I am not the Christ" (John i. 20), he confessed, "There cometh after me One mightier than I, the latchet of Whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and loose" (Mark i. 7). Again he said, "I indeed baptise you with water, but He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire" (Luke iii. 16). As if this faithful light-bearer should say in clearer language: "Wherefore do you gaze with such astonishment upon my brightness? For I am not the Sun. You shall find Him to be very different from me, so different, that in comparison with His splendour I am rather darkness than light. I am as it were the morning star, I besprinkle you with the dawn-dew; but He will send forth His rays of burning heat to dissolve the ice and to dry up the marshes and to warm them that are frozen, and He will clothe the poor as with a garment." Neither is there any discrepancy between the word of the Judge and the voice of the Precursor, since the fire promised by John was made clearly manifest by Christ when He said, "I am come to cast fire on the

earth" (Luke xii. 49). You will tell me, perhaps, that if there is warmth in fire so too is there splendour. I am not disposed to deny this: although it seems to me that of the two properties, heat is the more essential to fire. But let us rather listen to the Lord, and learn from Him what is that quality of fire which He most particularly recommends. "I am come," He says, "to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?" Thou knowest now, my brother, what it is He wills. But know likewise that there is "life in His good will" (Ps. xxix. 6), and that the "servant who knew the will of his Lord, and prepared not himself and did not according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes" (Luke xii. 47). Why art thou so impatient to shine? The time has not yet come when "the just shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. xiii. 43). In the meanwhile, this longing to shine is hurtful to thee, it would be much better to burn. But if thou hast so strong a desire for splendour, at least make sure to be in fact what thou wishest to appear. Seek first the fervour of charity and doubt not that splendour also shall be added unto thee (Matt. vi. 33). Otherwise thou shalt labour in vain, because splendour without fervour is nothing worth. That is only borrowed light, or rather a mere simulation of light, which does not proceed from fire. Now, thou canst not use for long that which thou possessest merely as a loan. And when thou shalt lose it, thy confusion shall be all the greater for having seemed to appropriate what did not belong to thee. The moon, so we are informed, shines without heat, but its brightness is a brightness borrowed from the sun; and therefore it changes so frequently, yea, so

constantly, "and never continueth in the same state" (Job xiv. 2). Hence it is written, "A holy man continueth in wisdom as the sun, but the fool is changed as the moon" (Ecclus. xxvii. 12)—that fool who lost his wisdom in his beauty (Ezech. xxviii. 17), that is to say, who lost his heat in his splendour.*

Lucifer, then, fell like lightning from heaven (Luke x. 18), whilst "upon it stood the Seraphim." Yes, my brethren, the Seraphim have remained standing in heaven, because "charity never falleth away" (1 Cor. xiii. 8). They stand rapt and fixed in the contemplation of Him Who sitteth on the throne. They stand in an eternal immutability, in an immutable eternity. Thou, O impious one, didst endeavour to sit, with the result that thy "feet were moved and thy steps unsteadied" (Ps. lxxii. 2). It is only the Son of God Who may sit on that throne, the Lord of Sabaoth, judging all things with serenity (Wisdom xii. 18.) To sit thereon is the exclusive privilege of the Divine Trinity "Who only hath immortality" (1 Tim. vi. 16), "with Whom there is no change nor shadow of alteration" (James i. 17). The Seraphim stand immutable indeed, but in their measure, and not in comparison with the immutability of God. They stand, I say, with eyes and thoughts directed to Him upon Whom they desire to look (1 Peter i. 12). He who presumed to sit manifested a desire to be content with himself. Hence he hungered and still hungers after malice alone, because this alone he possesses of himself. "When he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father thereof" (John viii. 44). What you hear con-

* Cf. *Sermons on the Canticle of Canticles*, p. 384-5 (Mount Melleray Translation).

cerning deceitful words understand as applying also to malicious actions. And although Satan takes an evil satisfaction in evil, he shall never be able to find full contentment even in wickedness. Therefore none is seated save the Sovereign Trinity Which alone possesses life in Itself. It alone is self-existent, and consequently is alone truly existent. It alone enjoys Itself,* alone needs nothing outside Itself, is alone self-sufficing.

* That is to say, no other being but God can find its happiness in itself, since it is for Him all else has been created.—(Translator.)

FOURTH SERMON FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY IN NOVEMBER.

On the Wings of the Seraphim.

"The one had six wings, and the other had six wings; with two they covered His face, and with two they covered His feet, and with two they flew."—Is. vi. 2.

After telling us that the two Seraphim stood upon the Lord's high and elevated throne, the Prophet goes on to say, "The one had six wings, and the other had six wings." But, my brethren, how are we to understand these seraphic wings? Must we suppose that when the winter is over and gone, and when the King sits upon His throne, the Seraphim, even the Seraphim, will still have occasion to fly from their post of honour in order to succour various individuals in their various necessities, to rescue them from imminent dangers, to assist them in their toils, and to console them in their sorrows? But God forbid that in those realms of bliss there should be any necessities, or dangers, or toils, or sorrows requiring succour or assuagement! What therefore shall we say is the purpose of the wings? As for me, I love that standing before the throne; I desire that it should continue always thus; I will admit nothing whatever which would deprive me of that standing. Nevertheless, I know that thou art a prophet, O holy Isaias, and that thou hast the Spirit of Him, the abundance of Whose loving-kindness exceeds not alone the merits of mortals but even their desires. But leave me that standing which

delights me so much. As for the wings, if they contribute aught to the happiness of their owners, I refuse them not. It is my belief that as the standing signifies immutability, so do the wings used for flying represent and promise vivacity, lest otherwise the standing should be considered as of something lifeless and statuesque. But it may be said: granting the necessity of wings, what need is there for so many? What use can be found for so great a number of pinions? Attend to the Prophet, who answers these questions in the words which follow: "With two they covered His face, and with two they covered His feet, and with two they flew." It seems to me that in these words what has been said of the standing is more fully explained by the flying. For whither do the Seraphim fly if not towards Him with the love of Whom they are all inflamed? See the material flame, how it is flying, as it were, and standing at the same time: and do you still wonder that the Seraphim are able to stand whilst they fly, and to fly whilst they stand?

But because I have told you whither they fly, your pious curiosity seems to demand of me now an explanation of the wings wherewith they fly. He who was privileged to behold them could give you a more certain and a more reliable testimony. Yet I think we may not unreasonably take those two wings to signify knowledge and devotion, wherewith the Seraphim are carried towards Him Who sits above them. The wing of knowledge lifts them up, yet it is not sufficient of itself to sustain them aloft. He who attempts to fly on one wing must speedily fall; and the higher he soars, the more severely shall he be bruised by his fall. This was the experience of those pagan philosophers, "who

when they knew God, did not glorify Him as God or give thanks, but became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Rom. i. 21). For, "delivered up to a reprobate sense" (ibid. 28), they fell so low as to be enslaved to the most ignominious vices. So true are the words of the Holy Spirit shown to be, "To him who knoweth to do good and doth it not, to him it is sin" (James iv. 17). So, too, does zeal without knowledge fall the more heavily in proportion to the headlong precipitancy with which it rushes forward, impinging upon obstacles and rebounding with violence. But *he* flies securely whosoever combines love with understanding, and zeal with knowledge; and he shall fly on for ever, because he flies towards eternity.

Now, with regard to the preceding words, "With two they covered His face and with two they covered His feet," the interpretation approved by some of the fathers is this: The covering of the head and the covering of the feet of God with the wings of the Seraphim symbolise respectively the mystery of His life before the creation of the world and our ignorance of what shall be after the final consummation.* This interpretation is accommodated to the reading of the Latin codices which have distinctly, "*His* face and *His* feet." Our Translator,† however, informs us that the Hebrew text can be rendered either "His face and His feet," or "*their own* face and *their own* feet." Hence, according to the ambiguity of the original, the Seraphim may be said to cover with their wings either the

* So SS. Cyril and Jerome, following, apparently, the great Origen.—(Translator.)

† St. Jerome.

face and feet of God, or their own face and feet. It may therefore seem surprising that the Author of our Latin version selected in his own translation that one of the two readings which appears to be hardly consistent with the other details of the Prophet's vision: which represents the Seraphim as flying at the same time that they cover with their wings the head and face of Him Who sitteth upon the throne. But I suppose he was influenced in making this choice by Origen's exposition of the same passage.

But if we may understand the face and feet to be those of the Seraphim themselves, we must consequently picture these latter with head and feet covered, and with only the middle part of their bodies visible, yet not altogether visible, because of the other pair of wings wherewith they are said to fly. Thus, I perceive my head, so to speak, and my body and my feet described in the words of the Apostle, "For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son . . . And whom He predestinated, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. viii. 29, 30). Therefore, my beginning has been exclusively the work of grace, and I can find nothing that I may attribute to myself in my vocation or predestination. But I am not equally excluded from the work of justification: this also is the work of grace, wrought out, however, with my co-operation. Do you observe, my brethren, how something of the Seraphim is disclosed about the middle? Furthermore, the consummation, too, belongs to grace alone, and here again I have no ground for glorying either in grace or with grace, so as to appear its coadjutor or

co-operator.* The human Seraphim, accordingly, cover their heads with two wings when they truly know and humbly acknowledge that they have been prevented by the mercy of God. They also cover their feet with two wings when they are neither ignorant of nor ungrateful for that other mercy which shall follow and consummate them. Even now we must not neglect to cover our head and feet in this manner; but it is then most especially we must do so when the Judge will sit upon His throne and will thoroughly enlighten the Seraphim standing before Him with the knowledge of truth, and powerfully inflame them with the fire of charity. May He vouchsafe to give us, unworthy servants of His holy name, a place amongst these Seraphim, through that mercy whereof I have been speaking, "which is from eternity and unto eternity" upon His elect (Ps. cii. 17), discovering to us at the centre something of free-will in the grace of merit, but claiming as its own, exclusively, the beginning and the end. Therefore is the Lord our God Alpha and Omega to us (Apoc. i. 8), so that we have a double cause to cry out, "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Thy name give glory" (Ps. cxiii. 9).

* "If there was not a special grace of perseverance, by which God in His free sovereign mercy sustains us, no soul should be saved. And yet that grace cannot be merited by us. God has not promised to bestow it on anything we do. There is no proportion or link established by His promise between our perseverance and this surpassing gift. It is to the end His free and sovereign grace. The first grace and the last, the Alpha and the Omega of our salvation are in His hands alone. No man can merit regeneration, which is the first grace in our salvation, nor the last, without which regeneration is all in vain. God holds the first link and the last of the golden chain of grace in His own hand, and bestows it on whom He will. We may pray for it, but we cannot merit it; we may dispose ourselves to receive it, but we can never claim it at His hand."—Cardinal Manning, *The Love of Jesus to Penitents*, pp. 104–5.

FIFTH SERMON FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY IN NOVEMBER.

On the way in which the Seraphim cover the Face and Feet of God, and on the manner of their Flying.

"*Upon it stood the Seraphim. The one had six wings and the other had six wings. With two they covered His face and with two they covered His feet and with two they flew.*"—Is. vi. 2.

The Holy Scriptures, my brethren, represent to us Christ the Lord as being *of* the Father, and *in* the Father, and *with* the Father, and *from* the Father, and *for* the Father, and even as being *under* the Father. When He is said to be *of* the Father, there is allusion to His ineffable divine nativity; when He is said to be *in* the Father, the reference is to Their consubstantial unity; when He is said to be *with* the Father, we have insinuated to us the equality of Their majesty. These three attributes, namely, to be of, and in, and with the Father, are eternal in the Son. But if He is born of the Father, in what sense is He declared to be in the Father and with the Father? Perhaps it would not be absurd to say that He reclines in the bosom of the Father and sits with Him upon His throne? And listen to the reason of this sitting with the Father and of this reclining. Just as the Son's mere sitting is expressive of majesty, so does His sitting with the Father indicate an equality of majesty, especially since we are told that He is seated at the right hand of the Father,

not at His feet nor at His back. Now sitting is already repose, but reclining is much more so. Which of these two shall we consider to be the source of the greater delight and sweetness to the Son : that He reclines in the bosom of the Father, or that with the Father He governs the universe ? In which of the two shall we suppose to consist that sovereign " peace of God which surpasseth all understanding " (Phil. iv. 7) ? To which had we better assign that singular repose of the Lord ? And if such a question cannot be worthily expressed in human language, perhaps it may be piously conceived in the mind : perhaps it may seem possible, without prejudice in any respect to the absolute simplicity of the Divine Essence, to draw a mental distinction between the equality of majesty and the identity of Substance corresponding to that which we recognise between the sitting of one person with another and the reclining of one person on another ?

Thus, the Spouse in the Canticle is not satisfied with beholding her Bridegroom seated : she asks to see Him reclining. " Shew me," she exclaims, " O Thou Whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou liest in the mid-day " (Cant. i. 6). Indeed it may be said with truth that every soul of healthy palate finds a sweeter relish in the words of St. Paul, " He who is joined to the Lord is one Spirit with Him " (1 Cor. vi. 17), than in the promise given to the Apostles, " When the Son of man shall sit on the seat of His majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel " (Matt. xix. 28). In the same way, therefore, we may consider that it is more delightful for the Son to recline in the Father's bosom than to share His throne. " I am in the Father," He says, " and the

Father in me" (John xiv. 10). The unity of Their Substance could not be more distinctly expressed. For since Either is in the Other, we may not conceive of anything of Either as outside or of anything as inside the Other; rather we must recognise in the Two the most absolute unity of Essence. But there is another unity resembling this, whereof we read, "He that abideth in charity abideth in God and God in him" (1 John iv. 16). However, the unity referred to here is but a spiritual unity and ought to be understood in the sense of the text quoted above, "He who is joined to the Lord is—not one *thing* or one *substance* with Him, but—one *spirit*." But the words of Christ, "I am in the Father and the Father in Me," designate a unity of Nature and Substance. Hence, on another occasion, as you may read in the Gospel, the Lord Jesus said, "I and the Father are one" (John x. 30). This substantial unity—to speak in accordance with the metaphor I have been using—is the bed of the Only-Begotten, and the most perfect repose of the Lord. And the same Only-Begotten—become now "the First-born amongst many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29)—introduces us also, according to the measure of our littleness, and by means of such harmony of wills and spiritual union as is possible between Creator and creature and realised by charity—the Only-Begotten, I say, brings us also into this, His own bed, and makes us share His own repose.

But when Christ is said to be *from* the Father, He is represented as having proceeded in a sense *from* the presence of the Father, and the reference is to His coming to us visibly in the incarnation, which, by His grace, we shall soon be commemorating. Hence, He said Him-

self on one occasion, " From God I proceeded and came " (John viii. 42). For " He was seen upon earth and conversed with men " (Bar. iii. 38); He stood in the midst of us, though we knew Him not (John i. 26), the true Emmanuel, that is to say, God with us, standing in our midst, but standing *for* His Father. His standing amongst us signifies the succours of grace which He has brought us; His standing for the Father designates His zeal for the Father's glory. For in all things He sought nothing else save the glory of the Father, Whose will, as He declared, He had come to do (John vi. 38). But, my brethren, if you now contemplate Him hanging upon the Cross, if you consider " Christ and Him crucified " (1 Cor. ii. 2), it is thus especially and most manifestly He shall appear to be *under* the Father. For such inferiority belonged properly and exclusively to the lowliness of His Human Nature, according to Which He was speaking when He said, " The Father is greater than I " (John xiv. 28). But shall we venture to say that He was also some time *without* the Father? No man, I believe, would be bold enough to say such a thing had not He Himself authorised it by His example, when in His agony He exclaimed, " My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? " (Matt. xxvii. 46). For in that hour He was, as it were, abandoned by His Father, inasmuch as there was no exhibition of supernatural power in His so dire necessity, nor the least revelation of His majesty.

Accordingly, we have Christ born of the Father, reclining in the bosom of the Father, seated upon the throne with the Father, proceeding from the Father, standing for the Father, suspended on the Cross under the Father, and dying, in a manner, without the Father.

Now in which one of these ways shall we suppose that the Prophet Isaias saw Him* when he said, "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and elevated" (Is. vi. 1)? For, as is evident enough, this vision is entirely different from that other whereof the same Prophet speaks thus, "We have seen Him and there was no beauty in Him nor comeliness . . . and we have thought Him as it were a leper, and as one cursed by God and afflicted" (Is. liii. 2, 3). On both occasions the same Lord was seen by the same Prophet, yet not seen in the same manner, and therefore not quite as the same Lord. For there He showed Himself all mangled from the scourging, "saturated with reproaches" (Jer. Lam. iii. 30), drowned in sufferings, overwhelmed with injuries. There Isaias saw Him an object of contempt, he saw Him fastened to the cross, he saw Him dying for our salvation, and he said, "He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins . . . and by His bruises we are healed" (Is. liii. 5). There, in short, He appeared as one "despised and the most abject of men" (ibid. 3). But here "all the earth is full of His majesty" (Is. vi. 3). There He is seen as "a man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity" (Is. liii. 3); here as the great Lord sitting upon His throne. The former vision is common to many, hence the Prophet, in referring to it, uses the plural number; whereas the latter is as singular as it is sublime. It is as one of a multitude he speaks about the former, saying, "*We* have seen Him"; but in describing the

* For the fact that it was Christ Whom the Prophet saw seated as a king upon a "high and elevated throne," we have the authority of St. John Evangelist, for he says (xii. 41), "These things said Isaias when he saw His (Christ's) glory and spoke of Him." Cf. A Lapide on Is. vi. 1.—(Translator.)

latter he stands before us as single and solitary, " raising himself above himself " (Jer. Lam. iii. 28), for he says " *I* saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and elevated " (Is. vi. 1). Rightly, indeed, does the Prophet call Him Lord Whom he saw sitting. For to sit is usually the privilege of the person who presides; to sit belongs to him who rules and to him who reigns. To sit simply is sometimes indeed a sign of lowliness, subjection*: but to sit upon a throne is a special mark of domination. Accordingly, as I have said, He Who reposes delightfully in the bosom of the Father, reigns royally with the Father on His throne; there He presents Himself to our contemplation as a most amiable Bridegroom, here as a most admirable Lord; for God is glorious in His saints, wonderful in His majesty (Ps. lxvii. 36).

" I saw the Lord," says the Prophet, " sitting upon a throne high and elevated, and all the earth was filled with His majesty, and those things that were under Him filled the temple " (Is. vi. 1-3).† Now what does he mean by the " things that were under Him " ? Did they constitute that which he calls a throne ? For however " high and elevated " that throne may have been, it was nevertheless under Him, otherwise He could

* For instance, the Spouse in the Canticle says, " I sat down under His shadow Whom I desired " (Cant. ii. 3); and Mary Magdalen sat at the feet of Jesus (Luke x. 39).—(Translator.)

† This is a combination of the Septuagint and Hebrew readings of Isaias vi. 1, and it occurs also as a responsory in the Office of Matins for the first Sunday in November. The Vulgate following the Hebrew, has: " et ea quae sub ipso erant replebant templum," rendered by the Douay translators: " and His train filled the temple "; the Greek: " καὶ πλήρης ὁ οἶκος τῆς δοξῆς αὐτοῦ "—" And all the house was filled with His glory." St. Bernard takes the words " ea quae sub ipso erant " to mean those rational creatures who were voluntarily subject to Him. Cf. A Lapide on this verse.—(Translator.)

not have been represented as sitting upon it. But in what way did that throne fill the temple? Furthermore, when even all the earth was already filled with the majesty of the Lord, how or by what means could the temple be filled anew (re-plebant)? You can see, my brethren, from what I have been saying, that this throne is not to be understood as a material seat, but rather as the angelic creation. For if the soul of the just man be the seat of Wisdom,* how much worthier a seat are the holy angels! It is manifest, therefore, that these blessed spirits are the throne of God's glory, "high" by their nature, but "elevated" by grace to a far higher dignity. They were made high by the Lord when He formed their spiritual nature, they were elevated when He bestowed upon them the grace of stability, whereof the Psalmist sings, "By the word of the Lord the heavens were established" (Ps. xxxii. 6). Consequently, the angelic choirs are the throne on which God sits, and which are under Him and fill the temple, although all the earth is already filled with His majesty. For He reigns everywhere as King, He rules everywhere as Lord, His majesty is ubiquitous, but perhaps not so His grace. No, not universal like His power "is the good and the acceptable and the perfectly accomplished (*perfecta*) will of God" (Rom. xii. 2). Otherwise what would be the purpose of the petition we make when we say to Him, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"? His will indeed is accomplished *concerning* all men, and accomplished likewise *through* all men, yet it is not accomplished *in* all men. The will of God is perfectly accomplished in

* Cf. *Sermons on the Canticle of Canticles*, vol. i. p. 312, note (Mount Melleray Translation).

the spirits of the elect when they begin to have but one will with Him. This unity of will results in a unity of spirit; hence we read in the Acts that "the multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul" (Acts iv. 32). "And those things that were under Him filled the temple": they filled it with all "spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephes. i. 3), they filled it with divine consolation; they filled it with the fruit of sanctification (Rom. vi. 22), because, as the Psalmist sings, "Holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord"; they filled it with all "the diversities of graces" (1 Cor. xii. 4), with "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of piety, the spirit of the fear of the Lord" (Is. xi. 2-3).

"Upon it stood the Seraphim." The Seraphim, my brethren, is the name given to the highest and most excellent of the angelic orders: hence they are rightly represented as standing above the rest. Nevertheless, however much they surpass the other choirs of blessed spirits, they humbly wait upon the great Lord Paramount, rendering Him their devoted service and fullest homage. For there is one way of standing proper to the Lord alone, and another peculiar to the holy angels, and still another characteristic of men. Christ stands in His zeal for the Father, seeking in everything the Father's glory; and as the faithful Only-Begotten of the Father, yea, as the Father's First-Begotten also (Rom. viii. 29), through the same zeal assisting the Father's adoptive sons. So the Martyr Stephen saw Him by Whose grace he was being assisted, standing at the right hand of God (Acts vii. 55). So too the Prophet besought Him to stand up as our Helper, saying, "Arise,

O Lord, help us" (Ps. xliii. 26). But the angels stand to minister. This is evident from the words of the Prophet, "Thousands of thousands ministered to Him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before Him" (Dan. vii. 10). As for men, their standing consists in tenacity of purpose and in an unconquerable strength of soul. So "Moses stood in the breach in the sight of the Lord to turn away His wrath" (Ps. cv. 23); so too "Phinees stood up and pacified Him" (ibid. 30).

"Upon it stood the Seraphim." What means it, my brethren, that the Prophet tells us that he saw not one, nor yet a multitude of Seraphim standing, but just two? For that two and only two appeared to him is evident from the words which follow: "The one had six wings and the other had six wings." To my mind there is a special significance in the fact that two of these spirits were revealed to him as standing, for "woe to him that is alone, for when he falleth he hath none to lift him up" (Eccles. iv. 10). Woe to thee, O spirit of pride, lover of singularity and of solitary presumption! Thou didst not stand in the truth (John viii. 44); thou hast been cast out: the foot of thy pride has not been able to support thee. Desiring to sit alone, thou hast fallen "like lightning from heaven" (Luke x. 18), and there shall never be any one to lift thee up again.

"The one had six wings and the other had six wings." Do you ask the purpose of so many wings? The Prophet shall tell you: "With two," he says, "they covered His face, and with two they covered His feet, and with two they flew." We have here, my brethren, a great and profound mystery. These words require from you

an attentive hearing, but much more strictly from me a careful discussion, and above all a spiritual understanding. I will say, however, just what I think and as well as I can, putting forward nothing as certain truth, but only as an opinion or a conjecture.* Well, then, why may we not suppose that, after Lucifer's expulsion, the Seraphim were appointed by God to guard diligently the heavenly gates, just as—according to the testimony of Scripture—the Lord appointed the Cherubim to sentinel the gates of the earthly paradise, whence man had been driven forth (Gen. iii. 24)? And not without reason were the Cherubim armed with a flaming sword to guard the tree of life from mortal hands, because there is nothing so terrible to the flesh as fire and sword. As for the Seraphim, they were given, not a sword, but only wings with which to baffle the eye of the evil spirit. For so we read, "With two they covered His face and with two they covered His feet," so that neither the lofty things of God nor "the deep things of God" (1 Cor. ii. 10) should be open to the view of the evil one's eye. The hour will come, it is true, when the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, but not before the fulfilment of that which is written, "Let the impious one be taken away that he may not see the glory of God" (Is. xxvi. 10). Meantime, His head is covered and His feet are covered, whilst something of His middle—if I may so express it—is left exposed for the contemplation, or rather for the envy, of the wicked one. And for this covering wings are made use of, which, whilst intercepting the gaze of Lucifer, lift up the Seraphim and sustain them aloft before the face of God.

* Cf. *De Consideratione*, v. 3.

But before proceeding further with this investigation, it is necessary to explain what those wings are wherewith the Seraphim are said to fly : " And with two they flew." Perhaps we shall not be far astray if we understand them as symbolising nature and grace, especially since I have already expounded in this sense the height and the elevation of the throne. For by the natural vivacity of their intelligence and by the supernatural, grace-given fervour of their will, they are always tending towards and intent upon Him Who sits above them ; and (as I have said) they are represented as standing because of their ministry, and as flying on account of their ardent affection. It is true, they cover the face of the Lord, and cover also His feet : still it is not from themselves that they cover them, but from the eye of the evil one. They themselves are for ever winging their way up and down from the feet to the face of the Lord, diligently searching out the deep things of His wisdom and the high things of His power. Nevertheless they run no risk of being " overwhelmed with glory," because they are not " searchers of majesty " (Prov. xxv. 27) : for they are guided and governed by the Spirit Who " searcheth all things, yea, the high* things of God " (1 Cor. ii. 10), and consequently their love keeps pace with their understanding. Lucifer, the spirit of pride, having light enough but no heat, depen-

* " Alta," which is rendered " deep " in the English versions. But St. Bernard understands it in the sense of " high," as shall presently appear. It may here be asked : if the angels are thus constantly advancing in knowledge and by consequence in love, must not their happiness be likewise increasing ? Some moderns, such as Mgr. Mazinod, Founder of the Oblates of Mary, have held so. St. Thomas (P. I. q. lxii. a. ix.) distinguishing between essential and accidental glory and beatitude, declares that the latter, but not the former are capable of increase.—(Translator.)

ding as it were on one wing, was able to lift himself indeed but rather for a fall than for flight. He gloried in his brightness, but neglected the warmth and burning ardour which the very name of Seraphim signifies. In consequence of this contempt he was not able to stand, neither had he the power to fly, because of his presumption. The energy of his spiritual nature raised him up, but only unto his ruin, for on account of his lack of grace he was presently cast down headlong. Not unlike to Lucifer's fall was the fall of them who "when they knew God did not glorify Him as God nor give thanks," in punishment whereof they were at last "delivered up to a reprobate sense . . . and their foolish heart was darkened" (Rom. i. 21-28). For before the eyes of their prince also has been spread a similar veil of darkness, which no natural subtlety can enable him to penetrate, and which still hinders him from beholding the head and feet of the Occupant of the throne, because still the Seraphim, standing and ministering, "with two wings cover His face and with two they cover His feet."

The Divine Substance, my brethren, must not be conceived as something corporeal, nor does It possess, like our human nature any distinction of bodily members. God is a pure Spirit, and all that is said of Him must be "spiritually examined" (1 Cor. ii. 14). Now who shall reveal to us that spiritual face and those spiritual feet which the Seraphim cover with two of their wings—who save the Holy Spirit Himself, Who knoweth all that the Deity includes, and "searcheth even the high (alta) things of God"? Indeed I am inclined to think that what the Apostle calls the "high things of God" signifies the same as what is here designated the face

of God. Therefore, according to this interpretation by the face or head of God we must understand His majesty and His sovereign authority, "His eternal power also and Divinity" (Rom. i. 20). The Psalmist is alluding to the head of God where he sings, "Thy justice is as the mountains of God" (Ps. xxxv. 7). What follows in the same Psalm, viz., "Thy judgments are a great deep" (ibid.), may be referred, as I think, and not unreasonably, to the Lord's feet. For what are the feet of the Lord but His "unsearchable ways" (Rom. xi. 33), and His inscrutable judgments, and the profundity of His wisdom, and the irreprehensible or rather incomprehensible dispositions of His will? To the same feet belong also and especially, as we know, the mystery of the Lord's incarnation and the whole economy of redemption.

It is necessary for us, brethren, to consider the loftiness of that divine justice which the Psalmist contemplated with astonishment and compared to "the mountains of God." Our own human justice—if existent at all—is a diminutive justice, so to speak, and though perhaps true, is never entirely pure. This we must acknowledge unless we would claim to be better than our fathers, who confessed with as much truth as humility, "all our justices are as a filthy rag" (Is. lxiv. 6). For how can justice be pure there where as yet sin cannot be absent? (1 John i. 8). But the justice of men can nevertheless be true, even in the present life, provided only that they do not consent to sin, so that sin may not "reign in their mortal body" (Rom. vi. 12). The justice of the first man was, at least in the beginning, not only true, but pure also, and such it remained so long as he was able by the grace of God to withhold his con-

sent to sin. But even this justice, not being firmly established, quickly lost its purity, and proved unable to preserve even its truth. Amongst the holy angels we find a justice that is true and pure and steadfast; it is lofty too, but falls infinitely short of the altitude of God's justice. For their justice is not innate in the angels, but bestowed upon them by God, so that of itself the angelic nature is capable not only of justice but of injustice as well. Is not this capacity for injustice the wickedness which, according to Job (Job iv. 18), He who is essential Justice found in His angels? "In Thy sight no living creature shall be justified (non justificabitur omnis vivens)" (Ps. cxlii. 2): these, my brethren, are the words of one who was by no means ignorant of the justice of God. Observe how he does not say, "No man," but "No living creature," lest we should suppose that he is excepting even the very angelic spirits. For the angels are included amongst living things, and they live more truly than men for that they stand closer to Him "with Whom is the fountain of life" (Ps. xxxv. 10). Nevertheless they also are just only by His grace, not in His sight; through His bounty, not in comparison with His justice. He is justice to Himself, Whose will is not so much righteous as righteousness, and both, viz., the will and its righteousness, are in nothing distinct from His Substance. Very properly, therefore, may we compare to a mountain that justice which is true and pure and stable and, if I may so speak, substantial. Oh, what unsuspected sublimities lie hidden in this head of God! How great a glory, how dizzy an altitude do we not discover in this shadowy and cloud-capped mountain!

But with what kind of wings do you suppose the

Seraphim cover the face of God from the gaze of the wicked one, so that neither the nobility of his spiritual nature nor the acuteness of his intellect can enable that evil eye of his to force its way—if I may use the expression—into the brightness of the true divine light? Perhaps I mistake, but it appears to me that these two wings are nothing other than their glory and their happiness. For the wonder they feel in contemplating that Divine Head is to them a source of unutterable delight, whilst they find their greatest glory in venerating the same. Now the wicked one of old experienced a like feeling of wonderment in presence of that Object, yet wonderment unaccompanied with veneration. And forasmuch as he refused to avow his inferiority by veneration, he could not be rendered steadfast by his admiration. For admiration itself he converted into envy, and disdaining to be a worshipper, he endeavoured to become a rival. How much wiser are the Seraphim who are made happy by their admiration and venerable by their veneration, finding—as I have said—their true glory in Him Whom to serve is to reign, and with Whom every one that "humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke xiv. 11)! Let me tell you now in what manner these blessed spirits appear to cover with the two wings of their happiness and their glory the head of God, so as to prevent the evil spirit from beholding it. As often as Satan turns his eyes upwards to heaven he is immediately met with the view of the angels' bliss and glory; thereupon the most malignant humour of his own jealousy obscures his vision, so that his gaze cannot reach any higher. In this way, therefore, that envious one is hindered, as by a double veil, from contemplating the loftier heights of heaven. For the sight of the hap-

piness and glory, considered separately or at once, of those whom he grieves to see above him, fills his mind with a jealous fury and forces him to avert his gaze. Is there any disease of the eye more afflicting than that of jealousy? Now the pains which torment the jealous eye have for their single source the sight of the glory or the happiness enjoyed by others. Misery, as the saying goes, has nothing to fear from envy.

But the Seraphim cover also with two of their wings the feet of the Lord, by which, as already remarked, we must understand the unfathomable abyss of His judgments and the unsearchable ways of His providence. The two wings employed for this purpose signify, as it seems to me, the two virtues of prudence and fidelity. For the Seraphim, being, as they undoubtedly are, faithful and prudent ministers of God (Matt. xxiv. 45), look after His interests and promote the salvation of the elect in such a manner as to baffle completely the eye of the malignant one. In my opinion, it was owing to this covering of the feet that the latter unwittingly caused the Lord of glory to be crucified (1 Cor. ii. 8). And I think it is due to the same cause that, through ignorance, he is constantly—though much against his will—furthering the interests of our salvation, and left to lament, when all too late, that his designs for our hurt have turned to our profit. Thus is his astuteness mocked by those "ministering spirits" (Heb. i. 14), who, being faithful are unwilling to disclose, and being prudent, know how to preserve the secrets of divine providence and predestination concerning us.

But just as of the two highest wings of the Seraphim —those wherewith they cover the head—the spirit of wickedness possessed one without the other, viz., ad-

miration without veneration; and as of the two middle wings likewise—those wherewith they fly—he had from nature a spiritual understanding, yet without any grace-given affection: in the same way, as you may easily observe, of the two lowest wings which cover the feet he was found possessed of prudence, but devoid of fidelity. You will agree that he was found possessed of prudence, unless perchance, you consider that it is not of him the Scripture speaks where it says, "The serpent was more subtle than any of the beasts of the earth" (Gen. iii. 1). Perhaps too we shall not be far astray if we suppose his fall to have been so desperate and his ruin so irreparable for this reason: because of all the various wings whereof I have been speaking, as he lacked none that belonged to the *left* side, so he possessed none that belonged to the *right*. This certainly was not the case with the two Seraphim whom the Prophet beheld in vision and describes for us as standing and ministering before the Lord of majesty. They cover His head, as you have been told, with two of their wings, that is, with their admiration, in which they find their joy and happiness, and with their veneration, whereby they are magnificently glorified; and His feet also they cover with two other wings, namely, with their prudence and fidelity; and the remaining two, viz., the vivacity of their spiritual nature and the efficacy of divine grace, they use for flying, as before remarked. But in the middle they leave naked and visible the patience and long-suffering of God, which, with His benignity, lead men to penance (Rom. ii. 4). For all can see how the Father in heaven "maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust" (Matt. v. 45). It is with

this charity that the true Solomon has overstrewn His middle—if I may use the expression—" for the children of Jerusalem" (Cant. iii. 10), so that such as cannot attain to the higher truths or fathom the more profound, may at least find occupation in this intermediate place, from which they may deserve to be advanced sometime to the contemplation of things subtle or sublime. But as for the wicked one, to him the vision of this middle part is at present a source of torment and shall be a source of still greater torment in the time to come. For in the first place, he is filled with furious jealousy at the sight of God's patience and benignity in our regard; and, in the second place, he recognises that now at all events the same patience and benignity can be of no profit to himself, inasmuch as he cannot thereby be brought to penance.

FIRST SERMON FOR THE FEAST OF THE DEDICATION OF A CHURCH.

On the Spiritual Dedication of the Spiritual Temple.

'Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, O Lord: they shall praise Thee for ever and ever."—Ps. lxxxiii. 5.

My brethren, we ought to observe to-day's festivity all the more devoutly for the reason that it is so peculiarly our own. All the other sacred solemnities which we keep are common to us with the faithful in general. But this is so proper to ourselves that if we do not keep it, it will not be kept at all. It is our own feast, because it is the feast of the dedication of our own church. It is still more our own because it is the feast of our own selves. Perhaps it surprises you and embarrasses your modesty to hear of festivals being celebrated in honour of yourselves? But, brethren, "be not like the horse and the mule which have no understanding" (Ps. xxxi. 9). For what of sanctity can belong to these dead walls on account of which they should be honoured with a religious solemnity? They are undoubtedly holy, but it is because of your bodies. Will anyone question that your bodies are holy, since they are "the temples of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. vi. 19), "that every one of you may know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour" (1 Thess. iv. 4)? Consequently, your souls are sanctified because of the Spirit of God "Who is in you" (1 Cor. vi. 19), your bodies are sanctified because of

your souls, and this house is sanctified also because of your bodies. The Psalmist's soul was certainly imprisoned still in this corruptible flesh, this " body of sin " (Rom. vi. 6)—in which it had even committed the most heinous crime of adultery—when he said to God, " Preserve my soul, for I am holy " (Ps. lxxxv. 2). Truly, " God is wonderful in His saints " (Ps. lxvii. 36), not alone in His saints in heaven, but also in those on earth. For He has His saints in both places and shows Himself wonderful in them all, beatifying those above, consummating the sanctity of those below.

Perhaps you would like to have some evidence of this earthly sanctity whereof I speak, and wish me to show you some of the miracles of these earthly saints ? Well, then, listen. Many amongst you, doubtless, have manfully forsaken their vices and sins, in which before they were as " beasts that have rotted in their filth " (Joel i. 17), and now they offer a stout resistance to the enemy's daily onslaughts, as the Apostle testifies, speaking manifestly of the saints : " They have recovered strength from weakness," he says, " and have become valiant in battle " (Heb. xi. 34). What, I ask, can be a greater miracle than the fact that one who before could hardly abstain for two days together from luxury, gluttony, rioting, drunkenness, and all the other similar and dissimilar vices (Rom. xiii. 13), is now able to pass many years, yea, all the rest of his life, without a fall ? What miracle can be more wonderful than that so many youths, so many young men, so many men of noble birth, in fact all of you whom I behold here present, should be willing to remain confined, as it were, in this open prison, bound by no other chains than the fear of God, and should persevere in

a life of such rigorous penance as is beyond human virtue, above the powers of nature, and contrary to monastic custom? You can see for yourselves, I think, what a multitude of miracles would be brought to light if I were permitted to examine in detail the exodus from Egypt and the journey through the desert of each one of you, that is to say, his renunciation of the world, his entrance into the monastery, and the manner of his conversation here. Now what are all these wonders but so many evident proofs of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in your souls? For, just as the vital motions of the body demonstrate the presence of the soul, so do the operations of the spiritual life manifest the indwelling of the Spirit. The indwelling of the soul in your bodies is made known to me through the senses of sight and hearing; the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in your souls is revealed in the exercise of charity, humility, and the other virtues.

Accordingly, it is your own festival, dearest brethren, your very own, that you are celebrating to-day. You have been dedicated to the Lord and the Lord has chosen and adopted you as His own peculiar people. "To Thee," says the Psalmist, addressing God, "to Thee is the poor man left: Thou wilt be a helper to the orphan" (Ps. x. 14, juxta H.). Oh, how wisely you have acted, most dearly beloved, in renouncing all that you might have possessed in this world, since by doing so you have deserved to become the peculiar people of the world's Creator, and to have Him as your peculiar possession: for He is, undoubtedly, "the portion and inheritance" (Num. xviii. 20) of His own! No, it is not true what the sons of iniquity have said: "Blessed the people to whom belong these things"

(Ps. cxliii. 15), namely, the temporal possessions mentioned in the preceding verse of the same psalm : " Their storehouses are full, flowing out of this into that ; their sheep fruitful in young, abounding in their goings out ; their oxen fat," and so on. No, I repeat, it is not the people possessing such things that are blessed, " but blessed is that people whose God is the Lord " (ibid.). See, therefore, if it be not right to observe as a festival the day on which the Lord adopted us as His own and took formal possession of us through His ministers and representatives, thus accomplishing in fact what He had promised long before, saying, " I in the midst of them shall be their God " (Zach. ii. 10, Apoc. xxi. 3), whilst we should be " the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand " (Ps. xciv. 7). For when this house was consecrated to the Lord by the ministry of the bishops, it was manifestly for our sakes it was done ; not only for the sake of such of us as were then actually present, but also for the sake of all those who until the end of time shall serve God in this place. Therefore, dearest brethren, it is necessary that what has already been accomplished in the walls in a visible manner should be invisibly fulfilled in ourselves. And if you wish to know what it is I refer to, I am speaking of five things : the aspersion, the inscription, the unction, the illumination, and the benediction. These things were done by the pontiffs in this visible house : the same are being daily accomplished invisibly in our souls by " Christ ministering as the High-Priest of the good things to come " (Heb. ix. 11). In the first place, He sprinkles us with hyssop, so that we may be cleansed and washed and made whiter than snow (Ps. l. 9), and may be worthy to have it said of us, " Who is this that

cometh up from the desert" (Cant. viii. 5) all pure and white? He washes us, I say, in confession, He washes us with the water of our contrite tears, He washes us with the sweat of our penitential labour, but more particularly does He wash us with that most precious water which has issued forth from the very fountain of piety, that is to say, from His own Sacred Heart. (John xix. 34). He sprinkles us with hyssop, which is a lowly herb possessing purgative properties. He sprinkles us with the water of salutary wisdom, which is the fear of the Lord, the beginning of wisdom (Ps. cx. 10) and the well-spring of life, seasoning the same with an admixture of salt, lest fear should prove insipid, without fervour and hope.* But not satisfied with cleansing us, He also writes upon our souls with the finger of God (Exod. xxxi. 18, Deut. ix. 10), wherewith He used to cast out devils (Luke xi. 20), and by which we are plainly to understand the Holy Spirit. He inscribes His law, I say, not now on tables of stone (Exod. xxxi. 18), but on the fleshy tables of the heart, thus fulfilling the promise made by His Prophet that He would take away the stony heart and would give us instead a heart of flesh (Ezech. xi. 19), a heart, that is to say, not hard, not stubborn, not Judaic, but affectionate, meek, docile, and devout. "Blessed is the man whom Thou shalt instruct, O Lord, and shalt teach him out of Thy law" (Ps. xciii. 12). Yea, blessed are they that are so

* The analogy between salt on the one hand, and the virtues of hope and charity on the other, is made clear in the Saint's fourth sermon for the Feast of the Assumption. As salt preserves flesh from putrefaction, so do hope and love prevent the fear of God from degenerating into despair, which is a kind of spiritual corruption. Besides, both hope and charity impart a relish to spiritual aliments, as does salt to material food.—(Translator.)

instructed by the Lord "and are mindful of His commandments—but mindful, observe—to do them" (Ps. cii. 18). For "to him that knoweth to do good and doth it not, to him it is sin" (James iv. 17), "and that servant who knew the will of his Lord and did not according to his will shall be beaten with many stripes" (Luke xii. 47).

Hence it is necessary that the unction of spiritual grace should "help our infirmity" (Rom. viii. 26), lubricating with the oil of devotion the cross of our regular observances and of our various penitential practices. For without the cross we cannot follow Christ (Matt. xvi. 24), and without the sweetening unction, who could support the bitterness of the cross? Here, my brethren, you have the reason why so many abhor and flee from penance, because, namely, they see the cross plainly enough, but cannot see the unction. But as for you who have had experience, behold you know (John xviii. 21) that our cross is truly anointed, that through the grace of the Spirit Who helpeth us (Rom. viii. 26) our penance is sweet and delightful, and that our bitterness, as I may say, is become most pleasant. But after anointing us with the unction of grace, Christ surely will not put His "candle under a bushel but upon a candlestick" (Matt. v. 15), because the hour has come when "your light should shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father Who is in heaven" (ibid. 16).

With regard to the benediction, that is reserved for the end, when the Lord will "open His hand and fill with blessing every living creature" (Ps. cliv. 16). The four preceding operations constitute our merits: the benediction shall be our reward. In the benediction

shall be consummated the grace of our sanctification, when we shall go into the "house not made with hands, eternal in heaven" (2 Cor. v. 1). That is the house which is built up with "living stones" (1 Peter ii. 5), namely, with angels and men, the dedication whereof shall be completed at the same moment that witnesses the completion of its structure. Wood and stones do not constitute a house so long as they remain disunited, nor is it possible to dwell beneath them until they have been cemented together: it is only in the combination that they can form a dwelling-place.* Thus the perfect

* Compare the following from St. Augustine: "As often dearest brethren, as we celebrate a feast in honour of an altar or temple, if we are living justly and holily, and if we consider the matter diligently and with the eyes of faith, we shall find everything appertaining to the building of the material edifice spiritually fulfilled in ourselves. For no liar was he who said 'The temple of God is holy: which you are,' also, 'Know you not that you are the temple of God?' (1 Cor. iii. 17, 16). Therefore, most dearly beloved, since it is by no antecedent merits of our own, but through divine grace we have been found worthy to be made the temple of God, let us strive our best with His assistance that our Lord shall discover nothing in His temple, that is to say, in our souls, which would offend the eyes of His majesty. Let the chamber of our heart be emptied of vices and replenished with virtues; let it be closed against the devil, opened to Christ. And let us so labour that we shall be able to open for ourselves the gate of paradise with the key, as it were, of our good works" (Serm. 252 de Temp.). "The festivity that has brought us together to-day is the dedication of the house of prayer. This house, then, is the house of our prayer, whilst we ourselves are the house of God. Now, if we are the house of God, we are being built up in this life and shall be consecrated at the last day. The work of building implies much labour, but the dedication shall be a time of jubilee. So what took place when this material house was rising from its foundations, the same is now accomplished when the believers in Christ are gathered together. For by believing, they are hewn, as it were, like wood and stones from the forests and mountains. And they are chipped, shaped, and smoothed under the hands of the tradesmen whilst they are cathechised, baptised, and formed in the faith. Nevertheless, it is only when they are bound together by charity that they

union of the heavenly spirits, a union impaired by no kind of division, affords God a perfect and worthy habitation which the indwelling glory of His majesty unspeakably beatifies. Who, I ask, could be so fully informed concerning all the counsels of kings, or who could possess so much knowledge of all their words and actions as the wood and stones of their palaces, if only they (the wood and stones) were endowed with sense and intelligence. Thus, my brethren, the living and rational stones of the celestial palace above, are admitted to the counsels of God, they know all the secrets of the Most Blessed Trinity and hear words ineffable "which it is not granted to man to utter" (II Cor. xii. 4). "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, O Lord: they shall praise Thee for ever and ever" (Ps. lxxxiii. 5). For the more they see, and the more they understand, and the more they know: by so much the more do they love, by so much the more do they praise and admire.

I have already told you that all the parts of that spiritual house are perfectly united and fitted together. It remains for me to explain now in some degree what is the manner of this connection and union. "The

constitute the house of God. Thus, had not these pieces of material wood and stone been united to each other in due order, had they not been firmly wedded to each other, did they not by their cohesion manifest their mutual love, so to speak, nobody would venture beneath them. But whenever you behold the wood and stones in a building firmly fastened together you enter that building with confidence and have no fear of its falling. Hence the Lord Jesus, desirous to enter our souls and to dwell there, said, as if raising the edifice, 'A new commandment I give unto you: that you love one another' (John xiii. 34). 'A new commandment,' He said, 'I give unto you. Fomerly you were in error, you built no house for Me, but lay prostrate in your ruins. Therefore if you desire to repair that ancient ruin, love ye one another'" (id. Serm. 256).

solder is good," as we read in Isaias (Is. xli. 7). There is in fact a twofold solder cementing together these living stones, the solder of full knowledge and the solder of perfect love.* For the more intimate is their union with essential charity which is God (1 John iv. 16) the more powerful must be the bonds of love that unite them one with another. Neither can any vain suspicion cause discord in that society in which the all-penetrating light of truth makes manifest to all the thoughts and sentiments of each, suffering nothing whatever to lie hidden.† For since "he who is joined to the Lord is one Spirit" (1 Cor. vi. 17) with Him, there can be no doubt that the blessed who are perfectly united to Him, with Him and in Him penetrate all things.

Brethren, if we desire to reach that happy home, our souls should "long and faint for the courts of the Lord" (Ps. lxxxiii. 1), like the Psalmist who sings, "One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life" (Ps. xxvi. 4). And we must also

* Hence in the ceremony of consecrating a church, the bishop prays: "Almighty and Eternal God, Who by Thy Son as Cornerstone hast united the two walls coming from different directions, from circumcision, namely, and uncircumcision, and hast brought together under one and the same Shepherd Thy two flocks of sheep: grant we beseech Thee, for the sake of this work of piety, that Thy servants may be united in the indissoluble bonds of charity, so that no discord of mind and no perversity of will shall ever cause division amongst them who belong to the same flock, governed by the same Shepherd, and live within the enclosure of the same fold under Thy watchful protection."

† That is, in so far as the angels and glorified human spirits *will* that their thoughts should be made manifest to each other. Without this will, the thoughts of the heart can be read by none but God, as the Saint himself teaches in his fifteenth Sermon on Psalm xc. Cf. also St. Thomas, P. I. q. lviii. a. 4.—(Translator.)

imitate the same Prophet who "swore to the Lord, and vowed a vow to the God of Jacob: If I shall enter into the tabernacle of my house", (Ps. cxxxi. 2, 3). But I had better reserve this for another sermon in which I shall communicate to you whatever light the Lord meanwhile may be pleased to impart to me thereon.

SECOND SERMON FOR THE DEDICATION OF A CHURCH.

On the kind of Temple God requires us to build for Him.

"That Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts."—Ephes. iii. 17.

Long ago a glorious king and a great prophet of the Lord, none other in fact than holy David, began to occupy his mind with a consideration full of piety. He judged it an unbecoming thing that the Lord God of Sabaoth had as yet no house upon earth, whilst he, the king, dwelt in a palace of royal magnificence (2 Kings vii. 2). My brethren, this is a matter which from us also demands serious thought, yea, and high courage in translating thought into action. It is true, indeed, that although God was pleased with the Prophet's design, the accomplishment of that design was reserved to his son Solomon. But that is another question, the discussion of which would lead us perhaps too far afield. As for thee, O my soul, thou in truth art dwelling in a noble mansion which the Lord Himself hath built for thee. I speak of thy body, which the Creator has so fashioned, so furnished, so adorned and disposed that thou mayest live in it with equal honour and delight; yea, and even for the body itself, He has also built a dwelling-place, lofty, commodious, and beautiful, that is to say, this visible and habitable earth. Does it not therefore seem to thee unworthy that thou shouldst hesitate to build a house for Him Who has provided thee with so good

a house? This house of thine is still standing: but know for certain that it will fall very soon. Then, unless thou art careful meantime to prepare for thyself another, thou shalt be exposed to the winds and the rains and the cold. Alas! "Who shall stand before the face of this cold?" (Ps. cxlvii. 17). Happy, therefore, and thrice happy, the soul that can say with the Apostle, "We know that, if our earthly house of this habitation be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven" (2 Cor. v. 1). Consequently, O my soul, thou shouldst not "give sleep to thine eyes, or slumber to thine eyelids, or rest to thy temples, until thou findest out a place for the Lord, a tabernacle for the God of Jacob" (Ps. cxxxi. 4, 5).

But what think you, brethren? Where shall we find a site for this edifice, and what architect must we engage to build it? As for this material and visible temple, it is for us and for our habitation that it has been built, because the Most High "dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts xvii. 24). What temple, therefore, shall we build for Him Who has said, "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" (Jer. xiii. 24). Brethren, I should be greatly troubled "and my spirit would be in anguish within me" (Ps. cxlii. 4) did I not hear the Lord Jesus saying to His disciples, "If any man love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him and We will come to him and will make Our abode with him" (John xiv. 13). But now I know where I have to make ready a house for the Lord, because His image alone is capable of containing Him. The soul is capable of receiving Him because the soul has been created to His image. Make haste, then, O

Sion, and adorn thy nuptial-couch, "because the Lord hath been well pleased with thee, and thy land shall be inhabited" (Is. lxii. 4). "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion" (Zach. ix. 9): thy God will make His abode in thee. Say to Him with Mary, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word" (Luke i. 38). Say to Him according to the words of holy Elizabeth, "And whence is this to me that the Majesty of my Lord should come to me" (ibid. 43). Oh, how great is the goodness of God! how great His condescension! And how great the dignity and glory of human souls in which "the Lord of all things, Who hath need of nothing" (2 Mach. xiv. 35) commands a temple to be built for Him!

Therefore, dearest brethren, let us endeavour with all ardour of desire and with all thanksgiving to build a temple to the Lord in our souls. Let it be our first solicitude that He shall dwell in each of us singly, and then let us try to induce Him to make His abode in us as a community also: for He is too good to despise us, whether as a body or one by one. In the first place, accordingly, we must each of us strive to have no discord or division in his soul, because, "every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation and house upon house shall fall" (Luke xi. 17). Christ will not enter there where the walls are leaning and the fences tottering (Ps. lxi. 4). For does not the soul desire to have her own house intact, and would she not be obliged to abandon it were its members severed and disjoined from each other? Consequently, if she wishes that Christ should dwell by faith in her heart (Ephes. iii. 17), that is, in herself, let her be careful to allow no dissension amongst her members, by which

I mean the understanding, the will, and the memory. Therefore, let the understanding be free from error so that it may be in accord with the will, for thus it shall be pleasing to the will. And let the will be free from iniquity, for thus it shall have the approval of the understanding. But if, on account of the iniquity of the will, the soul has to reproach herself with neglect of that which the understanding approves, she becomes at once the theatre of civil strife and ruinous discord, because the understanding never ceases to censure, to accuse, to judge and condemn the vitiated will. Hence the Lord says in the Gospel, "Be at agreement with thy adversary betimes, whilst thou art in the way with him, lest perhaps the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison" (Matt. v. 25). Let thy memory also be free from stain, suffering no sin to remain in it which has not been washed out by a sincere confession and "worthy fruits of penance" (Matt. iii. 8). For the conscience where sin lies hidden is an object of hatred to the will and of abomination to the understanding. He, therefore, has prepared a worthy house for God whose understanding is not deluded, whose will is not perverted, and whose memory is free from defilement.

But it is not enough that each of us separately should have attained to this: it is further necessary that we should all be bound and united together by mutual "charity which is the bond of perfection" (Col. iii. 14). As for perfect knowledge—the second solder*— that is not possible in this life, perhaps not even desirable. True, in our heavenly home such knowledge shall be the nourishment of love, but here it would rather be an

* Cf. preceding Sermon.

impediment. For which of us can pretend that his heart is perfectly pure? Hence it might easily happen that intimate knowledge would lead to contempt on the part of him who knows and to embarrassment on the part of him who is known. There knowledge shall be all joyous where there shall be no evil to know. Consequently the parts of the heavenly house are most firmly fastened together, because it is destined to endure for ever; but the earthly, which is only as it were a warrior's tent, is more loosely constructed. The latter, I say, is "the city of our strength" (Is. xxvi. 1); the former, the city of our rest. Therefore, if we are victorious in this, we shall be glorified in that, receiving a diadem in place of a helmet, a palm and a sceptre in place of a sword, a gold-embroidered mantle in place of a shield, and instead of a breast-plate a stole of joy. In the meantime it is better to suffer a little inconvenience than to perish, and to endure the weight of breast-plate and buckler than to expose oneself to be wounded with "the fiery darts of the most wicked one" (Ephes. vi. 16), from which may He guard us with His heavenly protection Who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.

THIRD SERMON FOR THE DEDICATION OF A CHURCH.

On how the Stronghold of the King may be defended and betrayed.

'Sion, the city of our strength: the Saviour shall be set therein as a wall and a bulwark."—Isaias xxvi. 1.

This house, brethren, is the stronghold of the Eternal King, and it is now besieged by His enemies. Consequently, all of us who have sworn allegiance to His cause and are enlisted in His army, have need, as you know, to look to three things if we would successfully defend the royal fortress. We must prepare our defences, we must provide ourselves with arms, and we must obtain a sufficient supply of food. What, then, are to be our defences? Let the Prophet answer: "Sion, the city of our strength: the Saviour shall be set therein as a wall and a bulwark" (Is. xxvi. 1). Continence is the wall and patience the bulwark.* A most excellent wall is the virtue of continence, which so encompasses us and protects us on all sides that death can gain no admission either through the windows of the eyes (Jer. ix. 21) or through the avenues of the other senses. A most excellent bulwark is patience, which sustains the first onslaughts of the enemy, enabling us to stand our ground manfully in spite of repeated

* St. Gregory interprets the wall to mean Christ and the bulwark the prophets; and according to St. Jerome the wall is a type of faith, and the bulwark of good works. Cf. A Lapide on this verse.—(Translator.)

attacks, and to keep up to the end an unflagging resistance. For when continence has been shaken and threatens to fall, the one remedy is to have recourse to patience, and absolutely to refuse consent, no matter how fiercely the fires of passion may burn. "In your patience you shall possess your souls" (Luke xxi. 19). In His own city, therefore, the Saviour is "set as a wall and a bulwark," being "of God the Father made unto us justice" (1 Cor. i. 30), and even made patience unto the Prophet who has acknowledged this, saying, "Thou art my patience, O Lord" (Ps. lxx. 5). He is set as a wall, I say, in the example of His life, abstaining from all the delights of the flesh and the world, and as a bulwark in His passion, supporting with fortitude every kind of affliction.

It is necessary also to provide arms, not material but spiritual arms, "weapons mighty to God" (2 Cor. x. 4), not only for resisting but for attacking too, yea, and for courageously subduing the enemy. "Put ye on the armour of God," says the Apostle, "that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil" (Ephes. vi. 11). What are we afraid of, brethren? If—as I grant—the enemy's temptation is very troublesome to us, we must remember that our prayer is far more troublesome to him. He hurts us, I allow, with his malice and his cunning; but we hurt him much more with our simplicity and mercifulness. He cannot bear our humility, our charity tortures him, whilst our meekness and obedience cause him the most excruciating anguish.

But neither can we be compelled by hunger to surrender the stronghold of the Lord to His enemies; for thanks be to God, that dreadful famine threatened by

the Prophet Amos, yea, threatened by the Lord by the mouth of His Prophet, "not a famine of bread, nor a thirst of water, but of the hearing of the word of the Lord" (Amos viii. 11), as it is written, "Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God" (Matt. iv. 4) : thanks be to God, I say, that spiritual famine has not come upon us. For we, my brethren, are in no want of spiritual aliments. We have instructions frequently and pious lectures more frequently still. Sometimes also we are allowed to taste the delights of spiritual devotion, even as "the whelps eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters" (Matt. xv. 27) : I speak of that heavenly table which is burdened "with the plenty of God's house" (Ps. xxxv. 9). We have besides "the bread of tears" (Ps. lxxix. 6), which although not very palatable is still most useful for "strengthening the heart of man" (Ps. ciii. 15). There is also the bread of obedience, of which the Lord said to His disciples, "My meat, is to do the will of Him that sent Me" (John iv. 34). But, above all, we have "the Living Bread" (John vi. 51), the Body of our Lord and Saviour, in the strength of Which we are more than a match for all the power of our enemies.

Thus, my brethren, has the stronghold of the Lord been fortified and secured, so that we have nothing now to fear if only we are determined to do our part with courage and fidelity. That is to say, if only we have made up our minds to be neither traitors, nor cowards, nor sluggards. For traitors undoubtedly are all they who endeavour to introduce His enemies into this fortress of God : such as detractors who "sow discord among brethren" (Prov. vi. 19) and nourish scandals

and whom "the Lord hateth" (ibid. 16). For it is manifest enough that the devil's place is in discord just as the Lord's "place is in peace" (Ps. lxxv. 3). Be not surprised, brethren, that I speak with so much severity: truth flatters no man. Let him know beyond doubt that he is a traitor to his King whosoever attempts (the which may God forbid!) to introduce into this monastery any kind of vice, and to make the temple of the Lord a den of devils. Not many such ill-disposed characters do I find here, for which God be praised. Nevertheless, I have found some from time to time, even in this community, holding communication with the enemy and by consequence in league with death. I am speaking of those religious who strive with all their power to relax discipline in the Order, to cool fervour, to disturb peace, to injure charity. These we must be on our guard against as well as we can, according to what we find written of the Jews, how that "Jesus did not trust Himself unto them" (John ii. 24). But I assure you that, although at present they are a burden to us which we have to bear, they themselves, unless they speedily amend, shall soon bear the burden of a heavy judgment (Gal. v. 10), proportioned to the gravity of the evil they design to inflict upon us. What sayest thou, my brother? Judged by thy conduct, wouldst thou not appear to be preserving allegiance to vanity, tepidity, or some other form of vice, and to be lying to God by thy tonsure? Certainly, thou wilt have deprived Christ of an excellent stronghold when thou hast delivered up Clairvaux to His enemies. Rich and precious in His eyes are the revenues which He draws year by year from this Abbey. Moreover, the abundant spoil captured from His enemies He is wont to bring

hither to this strongly fortified place, having the fullest confidence in its strength. For behold! we have here present those "whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy and gathered out of the countries, from the rising and from the setting of the sun, from the north and from the sea" (Ps. cvi. 2, 3). To what kind of torture, therefore, shall the betrayer of this fortress, after he has been discovered and seized—for certainly he cannot either hide or flee away—to what torments, I ask, ought such a traitor to be subjected? Obviously, he ought not to be condemned to any common kind of death, but must be made to expire in excruciating agony. But there is no need to dwell longer on this point. I am sure that henceforth we shall all be more careful to shun this most abominable treachery, and that for the future we shall strive with more than our wonted solicitude, not to introduce, but rather to drive out every species of vice, whether it appertains to the flesh or to the world, so that we may not deserve to receive either the name or the punishment of traitors.

In the next place, each one of us must be on his guard, lest, yielding to pusillanimity, he should abandon the defence of the fortress, "trembling with fear where there is no fear" (Ps. xiii. 5), and at the same time, with the temerity of madness, considering himself secure where the danger is most extreme. For he undoubtedly exposes himself to the power and to the swords of his enemies, whosoever he may be, that deserts his post, as if he were ignorant that these enemies are absolutely devoid of mercy, cruel to aliens, but much crueller to their allies, and crueller still to themselves.

There is a third danger which I shall now treat of, but briefly, because I have already overstepped my

time-limit, whilst in my great, though not undue, solicitude for your salvation, I have been seeking various remedies for our various moral maladies. Although, then, I may have no intention either to betray or to flee from the fortress, what is the merit of that, so long as I wish to remain there in idleness and sloth? Consequently, dearest brethren, let us strive with all our heart and with all our strength to guard this stronghold which our Lord and King has entrusted to our keeping, always on the alert against the cunning tricks of the enemy and ready to bring to naught his every artifice. Remember what is written, "Resist the devil and he will fly from you" (James iv. 7). But since we know who it was that said, "Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Ps. xxvi. 1), let us "be humbled under the mighty hand of God" (1 Peter v. 6), committing ourselves and our monastery with all devotion to His merciful providence, that He may guard us from all the snares of all our enemies, unto the praise and glory of His name, which is blessed for evermore. Amen.

FOURTH SERMON FOR THE DEDICATION OF A CHURCH.

On the Tabernacles, the Courts, and the House of the Lord.

"How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord. . . . Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, O Lord; they shall praise Thee for ever and ever."—Ps. lxxxiii. 2, 3, 5.

Brethren, we are keeping this day with devotion and praise and we honour it with joyous festivity. But inasmuch as it is neither expedient for us as religious men, nor becoming in us as wise men, to be ignorant of what we venerate, or to celebrate what we know not, we have to inquire: in commemoration of what holy object or objects has the present solemnity been instituted? I think I ought not to presume to answer this question of myself. At least, let another speak first whose testimony is greater (1 John v. 9) and shall appear to you more credible. Perhaps you are wondering why I commence the sermon in this manner, since you have plainly before your eyes this material church of ours, the anniversary of the dedication of which we are now celebrating? For wherefore should we fear to call holy these walls which the consecrated hands of the bishops have sanctified with rites so solemn? Yea, and from that time forward even until now they have been constantly listening to the sound of sacred reading and to the pious murmurs of devout prayer; they have been honoured by the blessed presence of holy relics, and,

as we believe, they have been protected by the unwearied guardianship of heavenly spirits. Someone may say to me now, "The other points, I admit, are evident enough: but who pretends to have ever seen these angelic sentries?" I answer that even though *we* cannot see them there is One Who can and does, the Same Who sent them. And Who is He? The Same Who announced by the Prophet, "Upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen" (Is. lxii. 6). There is indeed a second "Jerusalem which is above, is free, which is our mother" (Gal. iv. 26). But I cannot believe that there are any watchmen appointed upon *its* walls, since in celebrating the glories of that Jerusalem the Psalmist sings, "He hath placed peace in thy borders" (Ps. cxlvii. 3). However, if this does not satisfy you, listen to what follows in the testimony of Isaias: "All the day and all the night," he says, "they shall never hold their peace" (Is. lxii. 6). From these words, at any rate, it ought to be plain to you that the Prophet is not speaking here of the same Jerusalem of which you have read, "And the gates thereof shall not be shut by day; for there shall be no night there" (Apoc. xxi. 25). The heavenly Jerusalem, therefore, has no vicissitudes of day and night and no need of watchmen. But we do require sentinels to guard us during our days and nights. Hence it is of our earthly Jerusalem we are to understand what is written, "Upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen."

How kind Thou art, O Lord, my God! For not content with the poor defence of our mortal walls, Thou hast appointed over the human superiors of Thy human creatures a second guard, a guard of holy angels whose duty is to protect the walls themselves

as well as those that are encompassed by the walls. "Yea, Father, for so it hath seemed good in Thy sight" (Matt. xi. 26), and so it is necessary for us. For our ministry is altogether insufficient unless the "ministering spirits" are sent by Thee to minister with us and for us, so that we may "receive the inheritance of salvation" (Heb. i. 14). What matters it that we do not actually see them serving us, so long as we experience their help? What matters it that we are not accounted worthy to look upon them, provided we are allowed to feel the effect of their presence? At any rate we are taught even by this fact alone that things invisible should be preferred to things visible; "for the things which we see are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. iv. 18). In effect, the cause of the visible is found in the invisible, so that, in the words of St. Paul, "the invisible things of Him (God) from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made" (Rom. i. 20). Thus of old, when the Jews blasphemed the Holy One of God (Ps. xv. 10) on account of justification from sin invisibly accomplished in the paralytic, He refuted them by the visible miracle of a bodily cure. So we read, "But that you may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (He saith to the man sick of the palsy), I say to thee: Arise! take up thy bed and go into thy house" (Mark ii. 7-11). Thus also, when that proud Pharisee murmured against the Divine Physician of souls Who was engaged in the work of healing, and waxed indignant with the poor patient whose spiritual health was being restored, he was confounded by sensible evidence, the Lord enumerating the services ren-

dered to Him by the woman (Luke vii. 36-48). For he erred in abhorring, as if she were still a sinner, her who, clinging to the Feet of God, washed Them with her tears, wiped Them with her hair, covered Them with her kisses, and anointed Them with her unguent. For why should she be accused of faults already pardoned? Why should she be blamed for touching her Saviour? Why should she be accounted still a sinner, whilst by deploring her past transgressions she shows her hatred of iniquity, and shows her love of justice (Ps. xliv. 8) by embracing the Feet of Christ; whilst she proves her humility by wiping those Feet with her hair, and manifests her meekness by anointing Them with her precious spices? Is it possible that sin should reign (Rom. vi. 12) in a contrite heart and in an afflicted spirit? Or is it not true that "charity covereth a multitude of sins" (1 Peter iv. 8)? "Many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much" (Luke vii. 47). Therefore, O Pharisee, she no longer deserves to be called a sinner, as thou supposest, but rather a holy disciple of Christ, from Whom she has already learnt in so short a time to be "meek and humble of heart" (Matt. xi. 29). This is an instance of that truth which thou hast read in the Prophet, but perchance hast forgotten, "Change the impious and they shall be (impious) no longer"* (Prov. xii. 7). It is thus, most dearly beloved, it is thus the ancient "accuser of the brethren" (Apoc. xii. 10) reproaches you with your past sins "of which you are now ashamed" (Rom. vi. 21). But whenever

* "Verte impios et non erunt." The Saint's interpretation does violence to the Latin and is still more unsuited to the Greek: "οὐ ἐὰν στραφῇ ὁ ἀσεβὴς ἀφανίζεται." The Douay Version is: "Turn the wicked and they shall not be."—(Translator.)

this occurs, do you give ear to the Apostle who offers you magnificent consolation where he says, "And such some of you were; but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. vi. 11), and also, "Now being made free from sin and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end life everlasting" (Rom. vi. 22). In another place he expresses himself still more boldly, saying: "The temple of God is holy, which you are" (1 Cor. iii. 17).

This, my brethren, is the witness from whom, out of reverence for his authority, I declared—when at the beginning of this sermon we were inquiring as to the objects or persons whose sanctity is honoured to-day—that I would derive my first testimony. For although these walls may be called, and have in truth been made holy by their consecration at the hands of the bishops, by the daily reading of the Scriptures within them, by our constant prayer, by the presence of sacred relics, by the angelic guardianship: we must not believe, nevertheless, that even holy walls are worthy of honour for their own sake since it is certain that not for their own sake have they been made holy. This house is holy because of the bodies of you who frequent it, your bodies are holy because of your souls by which they are animated, your souls are sanctified by the indwelling Spirit of God. That such is the case cannot be doubted, since of the Spirit's invisible grace you are given a visible "token for good" (Ps. lxxxv. 17). I allude to the miracle whereby you have arisen like the palsied man in the Gospel, whereby you have so easily taken up the bed of your body, in which you previously languished, and whereby,

lastly, you are now going into your house, into that house, I say, the very thought of which fills you with joy and makes you cry out with the Prophet, "We shall go into the house of the Lord" (Ps. cxxi. 1). O admirable house, worthy of being preferred both to the "lovely tabernacles" and to the "desirable courts"! "How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord" (Ps. lxxxiii. 2, 3). Blessed indeed are the dwellers in these tabernacles and these courts, but far more "blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, O Lord; they shall praise Thee for ever and ever" (ibid. 5). For "glorious things are said of thee, O city of God" (Ps. lxxxvi. 3). The tabernacles resound with the lamentations of penance, a foretaste of heavenly gladness is experienced in the courts, but in thee is enjoyed the fulness of glory. Here on earth we have the tabernacles which are the lowest of these spiritual dwellings and "called the house of prayer" (Matt. xxi. 13); the courts constitute an intermediate place, the place of expectation; whilst thou art thyself the home of thanksgiving and praise (Is. li. 3). Happy, therefore, the man who in the tabernacles "declineth from the evil—of sin—and doth good" (Ps. xxxvi. 27), so that in the courts he may be delivered from the evil of punishment, and receive in thee the good of eternal glory! In the first dwelling-place are found "the first-fruits of the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 23), in the second the riches of the Spirit, and in the third all the fulness of the Spirit, where, namely, that "good measure and pressed down and shaken together and running over they shall give into your bosom" (Luke vi. 38). For men are made saints in the first, they find

security in the second, and complete happiness in the third.

The "first-fruits of the Spirit" which are bestowed upon us during our earthly existence whilst the war is still in progress, consist in holiness of life, purity of intention, and valour in the conflict. By holiness of life understand the fruits of penance and the visible observance of all the commandments of God. But inasmuch as this observance cannot be simple unless the eye also is simple (Matt. vi. 22), it is necessary to have piety in the intention and purity in the heart, lest otherwise we should be actuated by the ambition of honour or the desire of praise; so that He alone may be the object of our desire Who alone is able to satisfy our desire (Ps. cii. 5), and that all the graces which we receive may be referred back to Him Who is their Source and Origin. Remember, however, that of all the virtues none but perseverance obtains the crown, and that perseverance is extremely difficult amidst so many dangers unless we are endowed with a many-sided virtue to sustain us in our multiform fight. So much concerning our sojourn in the tabernacles.

But on quitting this mortal life, with its painful conflicts, we shall be welcomed, full of joy and gladness, into the courts of the Lord. There we shall enjoy the riches of the Spirit, rest from our labours (Apoc. xiv. 13), freedom from solicitude, peace from our enemies. For "from henceforth now, saith the Spirit, they may rest from their labours" (ibid.)—the same Spirit Who has been accustomed hitherto to forbid rest with so much strictness and to enjoin labour. He will then withdraw us from care and set us free from all solicitude Who now "giveth counsels in our souls" (Ps. xii. 2)

and causes us to be "troubled about many things" (Luke x. 41). He Who keeps us on the alert and ready girded for battle so long as the lion still rages (1 Peter v. 8) will then, when the victory has been won, allow us to slumber sweetly "in peace in the selfsame" (Ps. iv. 9). Nevertheless, in these courts, as I have already remarked, we shall find rather deliverance from evil than the reward of good: although indeed the cruel experience of our own miseries compels us in a manner to regard the absence of evil as the greatest of goods, just as our conscience is apt to consider freedom from great guilt as the very height of sanctity. This fact enables us to realise how far removed we are from the Sovereign Good, who thus esteem as justice immunity from sin and as happiness deliverance from woe.*

God forbid that anyone should consider the same to be true of "the plenty of His house" and of "the torrent of His pleasure" (Ps. xxxv. 9) and of all those other good things—whatever their nature—"that eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. ii. 9)! Therefore, O man, harbour not the hope that thou shalt hear now from me what human ear hath never heard. Seek not from a man that which is invisible to human eye and incomprehensible to human understanding. However, I will not, because of such ignorance, pass over this part of my subject in complete silence, but, so to speak, I will salute the home-land from afar. It seems to me, then, that I inhale a threefold odour of our heavenly country in the threefold

* Cf. vol. i., p. 323, note.

promise of power, of magnificence, and of glory. For a man was he like ourselves (James v. 17) and a son of this captivity (Dan. v. 13) who said, "I will enter into the powers of the Lord" (Ps. lxx. 16). We can conceive well enough what it is to be free from infirmity, because we are ourselves surrounded with infirmity: but what it means to "be endued with power" (Luke xxiv. 49), to "enter into power," and not alone into power but into a multitude of powers, perhaps even into omnipotence—this, my brethren, it is impossible for us to understand during our mortal life. The faithful witness who has already borne testimony further informs us that "whom He (the Lord) justified, them He also magnified"* (Rom. viii. 30). But that magnificence, especially as it ought to be worthy of the greatness of Him Who bestows it, Whose greatness is without either end (Ps. cxliv. 3) or number (Ps. cxlvi. 5): that magnificence, I say, we are not permitted to appraise. Would to God it were allowed us, despite our littleness, to hope for it! Nor is there any cause to fear or to suspect even the promise of glory. For then we shall be able to enjoy with equal bliss and security that very glory from the desire of which we have now to be restrained by many menaces. "Then shall every man have praise from God" (1 Cor. iv. 5), praise secure and sempiternal, without end as without danger, praise such as the Psalmist describes as "good," "joyous," and "comely" (Ps. cxlvi. 1).

Therefore, dearest brethren, whilst we live here below in the tabernacles, let us serve as gallant soldiers, so that after our death we may slumber peacefully in the

* "Magnificavit" for "glorificavit." The Greek term—ἐδόξασε—can mean either.—(Translator.)

courts, and be at last divinely glorified in the very home of God, when "that which is at the present momentary and light of our tribulation shall work for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. iv. 17), when "in God we shall be praised all the day long" (Ps. xliii. 9), not according to vanity but according to truth.

FIFTH SERMON FOR THE DEDICATION OF A CHURCH.

On the House, Temple, City, and Spouse of God.

"What is man that Thou shouldst magnify him? Or why dost Thou set Thy heart upon him?"—Job vii. 17.

To-day, my brethren, we keep as a solemn and glorious festival. So much I find easy to say. But if you proceed to ask me, in honour of what saint or saints has this festival been instituted, I may find it more difficult to give you an answer. Whenever we have the feast of an apostle, or of a martyr, or of a confessor, there is no trouble at all in ascertaining the name of the particular saint whose memory is being honoured, whether it be St. Peter, or the glorious Protomartyr Stephen, or our blessed father, St. Benedict, or some other illustrious prince of the heavenly court. But to-day's solemnity does not belong to any of these: and nevertheless it is a solemnity, yea, and no ordinary one. And if you desire to know, it is the solemnity of the house of God, of the temple of God, of the city of the Eternal King, of the spouse of Christ. No one surely can doubt that the spouse of the Saint of saints is holy and worthy to be celebrated with highest honour. And who will question that the house of God is holy, whereof it is written, "Holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord, unto length of days" (Ps. xcii. 5)? And concerning His temple also we read, "Holy is Thy temple,

wonderful in justice" (Ps. lxiv. 5, 6). With regard to the city of God, the Apostle John tells us that he saw it, and witnesses to its holiness: "I, John, saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Apoc. xxi. 2). In what I have just been saying, my brethren, something has been partially revealed which, I confess, it was my purpose to dissemble yet awhile. I refer to the fact that the spouse of Christ signifies the same thing as the city of God, that both are identical with the temple and again with the house. Nor should this surprise you, especially when you consider that it is one and the same Lord likewise Who vouchsafes to reveal Himself at one time as a Bridegroom, at another as a King, now as God, and now as a Father of a family.*

However, I do not suppose you will be satisfied until you have learned more clearly what that is which deserves to be called and to be in truth the house of this Father of a family, the temple of this God, the city of this King, yea, even the bride of this glorious Bridegroom. But, brethren, I feel a great reluctance to express to you my thoughts on this subject, fearing lest —which God forbid—my words should be heard by anyone either with doubt or with danger to humility, lest anyone should leave this room either puffed up by reason of the greatness of the glory or incredulous through "pusillanimity of spirit" (Ps. liv. 9). I desire that you should be always found humble and believing, because both faith and humility are in a special way necessary for salvation. For "God giveth grace to the humble" alone (James iv. 6) and "without faith

* Cf. Sermons xxxi. and lxxvi. on the *Canticle of Canticles*.

it is impossible to please Him" (Heb. xi. 6). I wish, therefore, and most ardently desire that you would be solicitous to show yourselves to Him as at once little and great, nay—which will astonish you more—as at once nothing and something, even as something very great.* For without a great soul you will not be able to contain the great gifts of God, nor to do violence to the kingdom of heaven (Matt. xi. 12), and neither can you enter the same heavenly kingdom "unless you be converted and become as little children" (Matt. xviii. 3). My brethren, I make no pretence to profundity of wisdom, nor can I communicate to you that which I have never received. However, I will describe for you how I sometimes occupy myself in my own soul, to the end that you may follow my example or such of you as may judge it useful to do so. Well, being persuaded long ago that if I would please God I must in the first place have pity on my own soul (Ecclus. xxx. 24), I have been accustomed

* "Humility thinks it can do nothing, owing to its knowledge of the poverty and misery which are in us; on the contrary, generosity makes us say with St. Paul, 'I can do all things in Him Who strengtheneth me.' Humility makes us distrust ourselves; and generosity makes us trust in God. You see, then, that these two virtues of humility and generosity are so united that they never are and never can be separated. There are persons who amuse themselves with a false and foolish humility which prevents them from looking at the good which God has placed in them. They are very wrong. For the good things which God has given us ought to be recognised, esteemed, and greatly honoured, and not held in the same low esteem as those other things which are in us and of us. . . . For the saying of the philosophers, 'know thyself,' must be understood, not only of the knowledge of our misery and vileness, but also of that of the excellence and dignity of our souls, which are capable of being united to the Divinity by His divine goodness, which has given us a kind of instinct, making us always tend and aspire to this union wherein consists all our happiness."—St. Francis of Sales, *Conferences*, pp. 69, 70.

to make my soul the frequent object of my meditation; and I only wish I could keep my thoughts constantly centred thereupon. But there was a time when such mental occupation had little attraction for me, because I then had but little love for my soul, or, to be more exact, no love at all. How could I love her whilst I loved what was her death? For if, as is certain and indubitable, iniquity is the death of the soul, you can see how absolutely true are the words of the Psalmist, "He that loveth iniquity, hateth his own soul" (Ps. x. 6). I, accordingly, hated my own soul, as hate her I should still, had not He Who first loved her (1 John iv. 10) inspired me also with that poor beginining of love for her of which I have just spoken.

Now when I reflect upon my soul—which by the grace of God I often do—it seems to me that I discover in her two distinct and opposite aspects. If I consider her according to truth as she is in and of herself, I can say nothing more certain of her than that she is reduced to nothing (Ps. lxxii. 22). What need is there now to enumerate one by one all her many miseries, how she is burdened with sins, enveloped in darkness, enslaved to pleasure, tormented with desires, dominated by passions, filled with delusions, always prone to evil, easily accessible to every vice, in a word, full of all shame and confusion? Now if as the Prophet says, "all our justices are as a filthy rag" (Is. lxiv. 6) when examined under the light of truth, in what manner shall our injustices appear? "If the light that is in us be darkness, the darkness itself how great shall it be?" (Matt. vi. 23). It is open to every one of us, my brethren, if we would only examine ourselves thoroughly and without any dissimulation, and judge ourselves impartially, to

corroborate in every particular the testimony of the Apostle and to proclaim with him, "If any man think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (Gal. vi. 3). "What is man," cries out a devout and faithful confessor, "what is man that Thou shouldst magnify him? Or why dost Thou set Thy heart upon him?" (Job vii. 17). What is man? There is no reason to doubt the Prophet's answer: "Man is made like to vanity" (Ps. cxliii. 3), he is "brought to nothing" (Ps. lxxii. 22): man therefore is nothing. Yet, on the other hand, how can *he* be nothing whom God magnifies? How can *he* be nothing upon whom God has set His heart?

Let us be of good cheer, my brethren. For if we are nothing in the thought of our own hearts, perchance a different estimate of us lies concealed in the heart of God. O "Father of mercies" (2 Cor. i. 3)! O Father of the miserable! Wherefore dost Thou set Thy heart upon us? I know, I know the reason! "Where Thy treasure is, there is Thy heart also" (Matt. vi. 21). How then can we be nothing considering that we are Thy treasure? "All nations are before Thee as if they had no being at all, and are counted to Thee as nothing and vanity" (Is. xl. 17). So indeed they are *before*, viz., as compared with Thee, yet not so *within* Thee: so they are in the judgment of Thy truth, yet not so in the tender affection of Thy heart. For Thou "callest those things that are not as those that are" (Rom. iv. 17): they *are not*, therefore, because it is the things that are not Thou callest, and they *are* at the same time because Thou callest them. That is to say, although, as regards themselves they are not, nevertheless to Him they are, but, as the Apostle says, "not by works but by Him

That calleth " (Rom. ix. 11). Thus, O Lord, thus Thou consolest in Thy loving-kindness those whom Thou humblest in Thy truth, so that being straitened in their own bowels, they may be gloriously enlarged in Thine (2 Cor. vi. 12). For "all Thy ways are mercy and truth to them that seek after Thy testament and Thy testimonies" (Ps. xxiv. 10), that is, the testament of Thy mercy and the testimonies of Thy truth.

Read, O man, in thine own heart, read within thy conscience the testimonies of truth concerning thyself, and thou shalt judge thyself unworthy to enjoy even the common light of day. But read in the heart of God the testament of piety which has been confirmed by the Blood of the Mediator (Heb. ix. 17, 18) and thou shalt see what a wide difference there is between what thou possessest in hope and what thou hast in effect. "What is man that Thou shouldst magnify him?" Something great, surely, but only in the Lord, since it is by the Lord he is magnified. How indeed can he be otherwise than great in the esteem of that God Who hath such great care of him? "He hath care of you," says the Apostle Peter (1 Peter v. 7). And the Psalmist sings, "I am a beggar and poor: the Lord is careful for me" (Ps. xxxix. 18). See what a beautiful connexion there is between the two thoughts expressed in this sentence, as if the Prophet ascending and descending at one and the same moment saw himself below in his poverty and need and God above full of solicitude for him. But thus to ascend and descend at the same time is really the prerogative of the holy angels. "You shall see the heavens opened," says the Lord in the Gospel, "and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (John i. 51). Nor do their ascents and

descents imply any such vicissitudes as those which mortals experience. For although the angels "are sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation" (Heb. i. 14), they never cease to stand before the face of the Divine Majesty, God in His mercy so providing that the consolation they give us should subtract nothing from their own bliss. When indeed would they be willing for our sakes to be separated even for a moment from that vision of glory whereupon they always "desire to look" (1 Peter i. 12)? And hear what Truth Itself says in the Gospel, "Their angels—that is, the angels of the little ones—in heaven always see the face of My Father" (Matt. xviii. 10). Therefore we must believe that they are so charged with the office of watching over the little ones as to be in no way deprived of their own beatitude. And if St. John only beheld the holy city coming down, that was because he could not have seen it where, at the same time, it was standing still. Notice particularly how he speaks of it as descending and not as falling down. It is true indeed that no small part of that city fell long before, but it was the part furthest removed from holiness, since the very cause of its desperate fall was that it made itself hostile to the sanctity of the whole (Apoc. xxi. 2).

John could not have witnessed that terrific fall and irreparable ruin, because he was not then in existence. But he saw the Word Who was "in the beginning" (John i. 2); he saw "the Beginning Who also spoke" (John viii. 25) to the Apostles, saying to them, "I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven" (Luke x. 18). Accordingly it is this part of the holy city which has fallen down that is to be restored by God when He shall

"rebuild the walls of Jerusalem" (Ps. l. 20) and "fill up the ruins" (Ps. cix. 6), not, however, with the same stones that fell out of their places. But as for the part which was seen descending, that was already prepared, as the Evangelist explicitly testifies when, after speaking of the city's descent, he adds that it was "prepared by God."* For that the holy angels descend instead of falling is due to this divine preparation, since it is God Who has prepared their will unto this and given them the necessary power (Phil ii. 13). So we hear the Apostle also declaring that they are not alone "ministering spirits" but "sent to minister" (Heb. i. 14). And in truth what wonder is it that the Word should send His angels "to minister for them" (ibid.) for whose sake He Himself willed to be sent by the Father? What wonder that the heavens were bowed down in the service of them for whose sake the King of the heavens bowed down Himself, even so low as to write with His finger on the ground (John viii. 6)? "O Lord, bow down Thy heavens and—since that is not enough for us—descend" (Ps. cxliii. 5) Thyself also. Is there anything more necessary? Yes, that they to whom He condescends should be made to ascend to Him. Now, as I have observed before, the angelic ascents and descents are accomplished without any vicissitude. We, on the contrary, are obliged to perform ours in alternation, because we are not allowed to remain aloft for any considerable time and it is not expedient for us to remain too long below. This is what

* St. Bernard read Apoc. xxi. 2: "Ego Joannes vidi sanctam civitatem, Jerusalem novam descendentem de coelo, a Deo paratam," not as we have it punctuated now: "descendentem de coelo a Deo, paratam, etc." Cf. Treatise on Consideration, p. 102, note (Mount Melleray Translation).—(Translator.)

the Psalmist signifies, where he says, " They mount up to heaven and they go down to the depths : their soul pined away with evils " (Ps. cvi. 26). But the meaning of these last words ? No doubt we are given to understand by them that in the present life the soul is more wasted with evil than delighted with good, because the former is possessed in effect and the latter only in hope. " Who then can be saved ? " asked the disciples of the Saviour. And He replied, " With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible " (Matt. xix. 25, 6). My brethren, here is the whole ground of our confidence, here is our only consolation, here is our one solid reason for hope.

We are now convinced of God's power to save us. But what as to His will ? Who " knoweth whether he be worthy of love or hatred " (Eccles. ix. 1) ? " Who hath known the mind of the Lord ? Or who hath been His counsellor ? " (Rom. xi. 34). Here, manifestly, we require the assistance of faith, here it is necessary that piety should succour us, so that we may know by revelation from the Holy Spirit what is the judgment concerning us which lies concealed in the heart of the Father, " the Spirit giving testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God " (Rom. viii. 16). Now, He will render us this testimony by calling us and justifying us freely through faith (Rom. iii. 24), which call and justification are, as it were, two golden links uniting our eternal predestination with our future glorification (Rom. viii. 30). I think, therefore, that the first of those two considerations, by which we are alternately brought low and lifted aloft, may be rightly referred to judgment and truth, and the second to faith and piety. Nor will you judge it anything strange that such contrary dis-

positions should be found in man if you consider well what a wide diversity of substances co-exists in his single nature. For what is more sublime than a spiritual essence? And what is more abject than the mire of the earth? This dissimilarity of the substances constituting human nature was not unknown, as I conceive, to the wise of this world, since they defined man as a mortal rational animal.* Marvellous, in truth, is the union between death and the faculty of reason, wonderful the alliance of intelligence with corruption. Thus also in man's character, in his affections, in his disposition, the same, perhaps even a greater contrariety is found; so that if you consider all that is evil in him to the exclusion of the good, and again consider all that seems good in him to the exclusion of the evil, it will appear to you an evident miracle that such insociable elements have been made to combine. Hence it is that the same man is justly called at one time Bar-Jona, and at another Satan.† "Wonder not at this" (John v. 28). Remember to whom it is said in the Gospel, first, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona" (Matt. xvi. 17), and shortly afterwards, "Go behind me, Satan" (ibid. 23). Remember also that he was truly called by both names, because called so by Truth. Consequently, the one individual had both characters although not from the one source. For he received the first from the Father,

* Cf. Treatise on Consideration, p. 42, note (Mount Melleray Translation.)

† The name Jona or John signifies in the Hebrew both "dove" and "gift of God." Cf. A Lapide on Matt. xvi. 17. Hence St. Jerome writes: "As a reward for his confession, Peter received a name which implied that he had a revelation from the Holy Spirit, because Bar-Jona means in our tongue the son of the Dove." The fact that Peter's father was named John is mentioned by St. John Evangelist, xxi. 15. Satan means "adversary."—(Translator.)

and the second from man : * nevertheless he was equally Bar-jona and Satan. Why is he called Bar-jona ? Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed to him what he said, but the Father (Matt. xvi. 17). Why is he called Satan ? Because he " savoured not the things that are of God but the things that are of men " (ibid. 23). Now if we diligently examine what we are, under these two aspects of our nature, or rather if we consider how from the one point of view we are nothing, and from the other something very sublime, as being objects of tenderest solicitude to the Majesty of God and having His heart set upon us : I believe our glorying will appear more modest, yet will, at the same time, be greater and better founded than before, because we shall glory not in ourselves but in the Lord (2 Cor. x. 17). For our one source of confidence is that we can say : if God wills to save us, we shall infallibly be saved (Jer. xvii. 14).

Let us now take our stand for a little while upon our lofty watch-tower and see if we can thence discover the house of God, the temple of God, the city of God, yea, the spouse of God. You see, brethren, I have not forgotten what I was saying at the beginning of this discourse. Well then, I affirm confidently, yet with fear and awe, that we ourselves are that house, that temple, that city, that spouse. We are all these, I repeat, but in the heart of God and by His gracious condescension, not through any merit of our own. We must not usurp what belongs to God, " so that man may no more presume to magnify himself upon earth " (Ps. x., juxta H. 18), otherwise God will make us descend to our own level, since He humbles such as exalt

* That he was an " adversary " or opponent of God's designs was due to his corrupted human nature.—(Translator.)

themselves (Luke xiv. 11). But if through silly pride we refuse to be saved "freely by His grace," we shall not be deemed worthy of salvation at all. For by dissembling our misery we exclude mercy, by presuming on our merits we leave no room for grace. On the other hand, the humble acknowledgment of our wretchedness draws down upon us the compassion of God. It is only when we humble ourselves in this manner that He will "feed us in famine" (Ps. xxxii. 19), like a rich father of a family, so that we shall appear under His care to abound with bread (Luke xv. 17). Thus shall we become His house, as it were, His house which is never in want of the necessaries of life. But remember that He has declared His house to be a house of prayer (Matt. xxi. 13): which admirably accords with the testimony of the Prophet where he says that God "will feed us—in prayer, doubtless—with the bread of tears and give us for our drink tears in measure" (Ps. lxxix. 6). Remember too that according to the same Prophet —as I have also mentioned before—"holiness becometh" the house of the Lord (Ps. xcii. 5), so that the purity of continence may accompany the tears of penitence, and what was already the house of God may thus be changed into His temple. "Be ye holy because I am holy" saith the Lord (Lev. xi. 44). And the Apostle asks, "Know you not that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Adding, "But if any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy" (1 Cor. ii. 16, 17).

But think you we shall even then have done enough when we have attained to this holiness? No, my brethren, for peace also is necessary to us. So the Apostle assures us where he says, "Follow peace with

all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see God" (Heb. xii. 14). It is peace that "maketh men of one manner to dwell together as brothers" (Ps. lxvii. 7), thus erecting for our King, the true Prince of Peace, a new city, which is also named Jerusalem, that is to say, "the vision of peace." For where a multitude of men are gathered together without any compact of peace, without the observance of common laws, without discipline, government, and a ruling head: there we have not a people but a mob, not a city but disorder: it is an image of Babylon, that is, of confusion, but bears no resemblance to Jerusalem.

But how can we suppose it possible for so great a Monarch to be transformed into a Bridegroom and for His city to assume the character of His bride? My brethren, the transformation is accomplished by that power to which nothing is impossible, I mean charity, which is "strong as death" (Cant. viii. 6). What wonder is it that love should lift *her* up, seeing that it has already brought *Him* down? We must not here contemplate ourselves under that first and humiliating aspect in which, as I have said, our nature can be considered; here we are rather called upon to exercise the magnanimity of faith. For these are the words of the Lord Himself, "I have espoused thee to Me in faith I have espoused thee to Me in judgment and in justice —God's justice, understand, not thine—I have espoused thee to Me in mercy and in commiserations" (Osee ii. 19, 20). If then thy Lord has not acted towards thee as a bridegroom, if He has not loved thee as a bridegroom, if He has not been jealous of thee with the jealousy of a bridegroom: refuse to be persuaded that thou art in truth His bride.

Consequently, my brethren, if by our abundant supplies of spiritual bread we are proved to be the house of the great Father of the family, if the possession of sanctity shows us to be the temple of God, if peaceful participation of a common life gives us the character of a holy city, if fervent love marks us out as the bride of the Immortal Bridegroom: then I believe I need have no hesitation in affirming this to be our own solemnity. And be not surprised that this festival is observed on earth, since it is observed also in heaven. For if, as Truth has said—and which therefore must be true—" there is joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance " (Luke xv. 7), joy even to the angels of God, we cannot doubt that to-day there is manifold joy amongst the blessed spirits above, over the conversion of so many sinners. Do you desire to hear something still more astonishing? Listen: " The joy of the Lord is our strength " (2 Esd. viii. 10). Therefore, dearest brethren, let us rejoice with the angels, let us rejoice with the Lord, and let us spend this festival in returning thanks to God: because the more our own it is the more devoutly ought we to keep it.

SIXTH SERMON FOR THE DEDICATION OF A CHURCH.

On the Various Modes of the Divine Presence.

"*Truly the Lord is in this place.*"—Gen. xxviii. 16.

The feast of the dedication of our house, my brethren, may be truly called a domestic festivity. But more domestic is the feast of the dedication of ourselves, which indeed is the festival we are keeping to-day. For to us appertained that sprinkling and that benediction and that consecration which were performed by the hands of the holy bishops, and the memory of which is recalled on this anniversary with joyous hymns of praise. "Doth God take care" (1 Cor. ix. 9) for dead walls? Surely no. It is not walls but human beings that can say, "He hath care of us" (1 Peter v. 7). Jacob was a man, and once whilst asleep he saw the holy angels descending and ascending (Gen. xviii. 12). But there is something more marvellous still. He testified that the Lord of the angels was Himself present also, for he said on awaking, "Truly the Lord is in this place and I knew it not" (ibid. 16). He wondered at the favour bestowed upon him, he was struck with awe at the greatness of the divine condescension: for so we read "And trembling he said: How terrible is this place!" (ibid.) 17. Oh, how much more terrible is this place of ours! And how much more certainly and manifestly the Lord is here, where it is not two or three that are gathered together in His name, but so

great a multitude of faithful disciples (Matt. xviii. 20)! Let none of us be ignorant of this truth, let none of us forget it. For "we have received not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit that is of God, that we may know the things that are given us from God" (1 Cor. ii. 12). Yes, terrible, undoubtedly, and worthy of all reverence is this place where the faithful abide, which the holy angels love to visit, which is honoured by the presence of the Lord Himself.

Now, we cannot suppose so great a patriarch to have been ignorant of the truth that there is no place where God is not present. Perhaps, therefore, it was rather the *special mode* than the mere *fact* of the divine presence that excited his wonder when he exclaimed, "Truly the Lord is in this place and I knew it not." For the Lord is truly there and there as truly Lord where angels and men are gathered together in His name. It is an undoubted truth that God is present in every place since He can be confined to no place, and nevertheless we speak of Him as being in an especial manner in heaven when we say, "Our Father Who art in heaven." The reason is, that in heaven He manifests His presence in a peculiar and singular way, not that He is different in Himself, but because His mode of self-revelation varies according to the various dispositions of those to whom it is made. God, therefore, is present everywhere, containing all things, and disposing all things, yet present in ways that are widely divergent. He is present to the wicked in this world as benefitting and dissembling, to the elect amongst men as sanctifying and keeping, to the blessed in heaven as pasturing and reposing (Cant. i. 6), to the reprobate in hell as rebuking and condemning. Thus,

He "maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad" (Matt. v. 45) alike, but where there is as yet dissimulation of sin, there, at least in a certain sense, He is not present as Truth. Accordingly, I would say—if such language were allowable—that He is present to the wicked in dissimulation, to the just in truth, to the blessed in bliss, and to the damned in His fury. Perchance you consider "fury" too harsh a word to use of God? Well, the Prophet speaks both of His wrath and of His fury, and each inspires me with terror: "O Lord, rebuke me not in Thy fury, nor chastise me in Thy wrath" (Ps. vi. 1). "Truly," said the Patriarch, "the Lord is in this place." For where God raineth "upon the just and the unjust" (Matt. v. 45), waiting for sinners to do penance, He is present as a Father and as the "Father of mercies" (2 Cor. i. 3). Where He condemns the obdurate, He is present as Judge, and we know that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. x. 31). He is present as a Bridegroom where He reposes. And happy the soul He vouchsafes to bring into His bed-chamber! But it is rather as Lord that He is present in this place, if yet we serve Him "in spirit and in truth" (John iv. 23). For, evidently, He was not truly Lord to them to whom He said, "Why call you Me Lord, Lord: and do not the things which I say?" (Luke vi. 46). We know from the testimony of the Holy Scriptures that the first Adam was "put into a paradise of pleasure to work in it and to keep it" (Gen. ii. 15). In the same manner the second Adam has put Himself in the Church of the saints, in the congregation of His disciples, in the garden of His delights—for His "delight is to be with the children of men" (Prov. viii. 31): thus, I

say, the Lord Himself is in this place "to work in it and to keep it." For not only must we believe that "unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Ps. cxxvi. 1), but also, that "unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it" (ibid. 2). Furthermore, from what the Patriarch saw in the vision we can be sure that in this place also the angels are ascending and descending, ascending to contemplate the face of the Father, descending to minister unto us. Now, my brethren, what practical conclusion are we to draw from all this? In what manner ought we to deport ourselves, with what reverence ought we to stand in this holy place which the Lord is working in and keeping, where the angels are ascending and descending? Doubtless we must show ourselves contrite and vigilant. For that is the way in which we must "forget the things that are behind" (Phil. iii. 13), namely, we must disown, condemn, and "recount all our years in the bitterness of our soul" (Is. xxxviii. 15), and then, in thought and the eagerness of desire we must "stretch forth ourselves to those things that are before" (Phil. iii. 13). It is for this we have been brought hither, and for this have we been established here. For what more is required of us but that we do penance for the sins of the past and look forward with hope to the rewards of the future?

FIRST SERMON ON ST. MALACHY.

PREACHED IN THE NEW CEMETERY OF CLAIRVAUX, NOVEMBER 2ND, 1148, AFTER THE HOLY BISHOP'S BURIAL.

To-day, dearest brethren, the Lord has provided for you an abundant benediction the dispensation whereof has been committed to me. And if that dispensation be not faithfully made, you no doubt will be at serious loss, whilst I shall have exposed myself to danger. I am frightened, therefore, at the thought of the loss to you and of my own condemnation if ever it should be said to me, "The little ones have asked for bread and there was none to break it unto them" (Jer. Lam. iv. 4). I know well what need you have of heavenly consolation, you who have so openly and so manfully renounced the delights of the flesh and the pleasures of the world. Let no one, then, have any doubt that it was by heaven's particular favour to this community and in accordance with a special divine counsel, that Bishop Malachy has slept in our midst this day* and obtained his long-cherished desire to be buried amongst us. For if no single leaf can fall to the ground from any tree except by the permission of God: who is so blind as not to see a marvellous design of divine mercy to us in the coming and the passing of this blessed Bishop? From the ends of the earth he came to

* St. Malachy died shortly after midnight, between the 1st and 2nd of November, and was buried on the evening of the latter day.—(Translator.)

deposit here the earth of his body. Such, as you are aware, was his most ardent desire because of the great love he bore us, although that was not the motive which then brought him hither. Many were the obstacles he had to encounter in his last journey. He could not even obtain permission to cross over from England until the time of his consummation was drawing near, and the bound which cannot be passed (Ps. ciii. 9). On his arrival in our midst, worn out with the multiplied labours of the road, we received him as an angel of God, so great was our reverence for his sanctity. And he, on his side, in accordance with his kindness of heart and deep-rooted humility, returned our salutations with a tenderness of affection far beyond our deserts. He appeared to be in the best of health for the next few days which he spent amongst us, awaiting the arrival of his travelling companions. These had been dispersed in England in consequence of the opposition made by the suspicious King * of that country to Malachy's departure thence. At last all were assembled, and the man of God was preparing to resume his journey to the court of Rome, when he was suddenly struck down by sickness. He recognised at once that this was a summons to appear rather at the heavenly court, "God providing something better for us, that he should not be consummated" elsewhere, after going forth from our monastery (Heb. xi. 40).

The physicians at first could find in him no symptom, I do not say of approaching death, but even of any grave illness. He, however, full of spiritual

* Stephen. Cf. "Closing scenes of St. Malachy's life" in Appendix to this volume.—(Translator.)

joy, confidently affirmed that his death was inevitable before the end of this year. We strove against him, offering up fervent prayers to God for his recovery and doing all in our power to prevent the fulfilment of his desire and prediction. But all to no purpose, for his merits prevailed. He was granted the wish of his heart and "the will of his lips was not withholden from him" (Ps. xx. 3). Everything fell out exactly as he wanted. For, under the inspiration of God's mercy towards us, he had chosen this of all others to be the place of his resurrection, and had long entertained the desire that he should be laid to rest on this day of the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed. There was yet another consolation for us, which may justly be said to have crowned our joy. It was that this same day had already been chosen by us, at the suggestion no doubt of the Spirit of God, as the most proper for reinterring here in our new cemetery the bones of our brethren brought hither from the old. The holy Bishop declared himself extremely delighted with our chant on that occasion: for we carried the remains in solemn procession, singing psalms as we walked according to our custom. And now, so soon after, he himself has been brought on the same road, having fallen asleep in the Lord most sweetly and blissfully.* We therefore return thanks to God for all the dispositions of His providence: for that He has been pleased to honour our unworthiness by permitting us to be the witnesses of so holy a death, for that He has willed to enrich our poverty with the treasure beyond price

* The reinterment took place on All Souls' Day, but the bones had been brought from the old cemetery two or three days earlier: it was from his sick-bed that St. Malachy heard the processional singing.—(Translator.)

of so sacred a body, and for that He has vouchsafed to prop up our weakness with so mighty a pillar of the Church. The favour bestowed upon us is undoubtedly "a token for good" (Ps. lxxxv. 17) of one or other of two things, namely, either that this place is already pleasing to God, or else that He purposes to make it pleasing, since He has brought hither from the end of the world a man of such sanctity to die and to be buried here.

But our love for this blessed father obliges us to sympathise most heartily with his people, and to shudder with horror at the cruelty of that death which has not hesitated to inflict so severe a wound on the suffering church of Ireland. Cruel indeed and inexorable must have been that death which, by striking down one man, has punished so great a multitude; yea, blind and improvident, since it has tied Malachy's tongue, fettered his feet, paralysed his hands, and closed his eyes. Yes, I repeat, it has closed for ever those eyes full of tenderness which by the abundance of their compassionate tears were wont to obtain for sinners the grace of divine forgiveness; it has paralysed those most pure hands which loved to be always employed in lowly and wearisome labour, which had so often offered up the saving Sacrifice of the Lord's Body for the conversion of sinners, which were constantly "lifted up without anger and contention" (1 Tim. ii. 8) in prayer to God, which, as is well known, bestowed multiplied benefits upon the sick and were glorified by the working of manifold miracles; it has fettered those feet, those beautiful feet, of him who used to preach peace and to bring good tidings (Is. lii. 7, Rom. x. 15), those feet which

so often wearied themselves on missions of mercy, which made the very ground whereon they trod for ever worthy of being kissed with most devout affection ; finally, it locked those holy, priestly lips which " kept knowledge " (Mal. ii. 7), that mouth of a just man which meditated wisdom, and that tongue which spoke judgment (Ps. xxxvi. 30), yea, but not without mercy (Ps. c. 1), and was accustomed to heal the most desperate spiritual wounds. But, dearest brethren, we should not think it strange that death is iniquitous, considering that it has been begotten of iniquity, or that it is blind, since seduction has brought it forth. No wonder, I say, that it smites without distinction, being the daughter of transgression ; that it is cruel and irrational, sprung, as it is, from the deceit of the old serpent and the folly of the first woman. And why should we complain of it for daring to touch Malachy, who, after all, was but a faithful member of Christ, since in its mad fury it presumed to attack Him Who is the Head not alone of Malachy but of all the elect ? Yes, it attacked even the Head Whom it could not hurt, nor did it escape unhurt itself. Death impinged upon life and life enclosed death within its periphery, and death was swallowed up by life (1 Cor. xv. 54, 2 Cor. v. 4). As a fish gulping down the hook with the bait, it found itself held fast by that which it had expected to hold.

But perhaps some of you will say to me now : " How does death seem to have been vanquished by the Head whilst it still rages with so much liberty against the members ? If death be dead, how has it slain Malachy ? If vanquished, how is it that it still prevails against all, so that there is not a man ' that shall live and not see death ' " (Ps. lxxxviii. 49) ? Nevertheless, van-

quished surely is death, the work of the devil and the penalty of sin. For sin, which is the cause of death, has been vanquished, and vanquished too the wicked one, the author both of sin and of death. And these three have not only been vanquished, but judged also and condemned. Their sentence has been pronounced, although not yet executed. The fire is already prepared for the devil (Matt. xxv. 41), although he has not yet been precipitated into it, being permitted to work mischief for a short time still (Apoc. xii. 12). He is become as a hammer in the hands of the heavenly Artificer, as "the hammer of the whole earth" (Jer. l. 23): he batters the elect to their profit, and he crushes the reprobate to their ruin. And as is the head of the house, so are they of his household (Matt. x. 25), that is, sin and death. For with regard to sin, although we are assured that it has been fastened with Christ to the cross (Col. ii. 14), nevertheless it was still allowed, not indeed to reign, but to dwell in the Apostle himself so long as he lived (Rom. vi. 12, vii. 20). Unless I am greatly mistaken these are his own words: "If then I do that which I will not, I consent to the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it but sin that dwelleth in me" (Rom. vii. 16, 17). As to death, it also is still allowed to remain with us, but has no longer any power to do us hurt. The time will come, however, when it shall be said, "O death, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. xv. 55); for then the last of our enemies shall be destroyed (ibid. 26). In the meantime, by the will of Him Who has power over life and death and confines the waters of the sea within the fixed bounds of its shores, death itself is become as a refreshing sleep to the beloved of the Lord. We have

for this the testimony of the Psalmist who says, " When He shall give sleep to His beloved, behold the inheritance of the Lord " (Ps. cxxvi. 2, 3). " The death of the wicked is very evil " (Ps. xxxiii. 22) indeed, because their birth is bad and their life worse: but " precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints " (Ps. cxv. 6). Precious in truth, because it is for them the end of their labours, the consummation of their victory, the gate of life, and the entrance into everlasting repose.

Let us therefore, dearest brethren, let us congratulate (as is fitting) our holy father, because it is piety to mourn for Malachy dead, and it is still greater piety to rejoice with Malachy re-born to a new life. Can it be doubted that Malachy lives? Yea, live he does, and most blissfully. " In the sight of the unwise he seemed to die: but he is in peace " (Wisdom iii. 2, 3); for already he is a " fellow-citizen with the saints and a domestic of God " (Eph. ii. 19), and he joins with all the blessed in singing and giving thanks to the Lord, saying, " We have passed through fire and water, and Thou hast brought us out into a refreshment " (Ps. lxv. 12). Manfully indeed has he passed through life and blissfully passed beyond to glory. As a true Hebrew, he celebrated the Pasch in spirit,* and when passing he said to us, " With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you " (Luke xxii. 15). Verily he passed through fire and water, since neither adversity

* The Saint is here playing upon the words " Hebrew " and " Pasch," which are closely allied in their signification, the latter meaning " a passing over " and the former, " From beyond." Some scholars connect the word " Hebrew " with Heber, the son of Sale (Gen. xi. 14), but this is proved to be an error by Lamy, *Int. in Sacr. Script.*, i. 81.—(Translator.)

could cast him down nor prosperity hold him back. Brethren, underneath us is a place entirely occupied with raging flames, so that the unhappy Dives was unable to obtain there the least drop of water from the finger of Lazarus (Luke xvi. 24, 5). Above us is that city of God which is made joyful by the stream of the river (Ps. xlv. 5), by the torrent of the divine pleasure (Ps. xxxv. 9), by the goodly chalice which inebriateth (Ps. xxii. 5). And here in the middle place, between both extremes, is found the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. ii. 9). Here, I say, it is possible to have experience of delight and tribulation : an alternation of joy and misery which we owe to unhappy Eve. Here undoubtedly we have day and night together, whereas in hell there is nothing but night and in heaven only day. Happy the soul that has passed victoriously through both trials, neither cleaving to pleasure nor succumbing to pain.

I think I ought to give you now, dearest brethren, a short account of one of the many noble actions performed by this illustrious Prelate, one in which he will appear to you to have passed most courageously through fire and water. A brood of tyrants had usurped the metropolitan see of the great St. Patrick, Apostle of Ireland, creating archbishops in regular hereditary succession, and "possessing for an inheritance the sanctuary of God" (Ps. lxxxii. 13).* The faithful of the

* Cf. *Life*, c. iv. "For more than two hundred years a family of usurpers had established themselves at Armagh, and held the land and see of Armagh, transmitting it from father to son or grandson, in regular hereditary succession. Most of them were laymen and married men ; but they paid regularly ordained prelates to perform all necessary episcopal functions, keeping for themselves the lands, the nomination to churches, and even the titles of Bishops and Abbots of Armagh. It has

district besought our Malachy to enter the lists against so scandalous an abuse. Therefore "putting his life in his hand" (1 Kings xix. 5), he set forth undauntedly and assumed the administration of the archdiocese, exposing himself to imminent danger for the purpose of putting a stop to such a crying disorder. Encompassed with perils, he governed the primatial church; but as soon as all danger had vanished, he resigned the see of Armagh in favour of another whom he had consecrated conformably to the sacred canons. For he had consented to administer that see only on the express condition that, when the fury of persecution had subsided, and another archbishop could be safely installed, he himself should be allowed to return to his own diocese. There he spent the remainder of his life, living like a simple monk in the religious establishments which he had founded, without any private property, without any revenues, ecclesiastical or civil. Thus was the man of God tried in the furnace of affliction (Ps. lxv. 10), tried, I say, but not consumed, for Malachy was of purest gold. Thus could he be neither held captive nor softened by the potent influence of worldly pleasure, nor even induced to halt on his road as a curious spectator, momentarily forgetful of his banishment.

been said that some of these married men were regularly consecrated prelates, duly recognised by the Irish Church. There is not the shadow of evidence for the statement, except the name of bishop given to some of them. On the other hand we have unexceptionable testimony that these men were laymen, and that the title of bishop was given them although they were laymen. St. Bernard settles the question. He says that this wicked and adulterous generation were so obstinate in asserting the right of hereditary succession that though *clerics* of their blood were wanting, *bishops* were never wanting, viz., bishops who were not even clerics."—Healy, *Ireland's Ancient Schools and Scholars*, p. 395.—(Translator.)

Which of you, my brethren, would not eagerly desire to imitate such sanctity, if he might dare to harbour even a hope of coming up to it? I am sure, therefore, you would give me an attentive hearing if haply I could tell you what it was that made Malachy a saint. However, lest my own testimony should appear not sufficiently reliable, listen rather to what the Scripture says, "He sanctified him in his faith and meekness" (Ecclus. xlv. 4). It was by faith that he trod the world under foot, according to the words of St. John the Evangelist, who says, "This is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith" (1 John v. 4). And it was in the spirit of meekness he supported with unruffled patience every kind of hardship and contradiction. Thus, on the one hand, after the example of Christ, he walked upon the waves by faith, lest he should be captivated by the allurements of pleasure; and, on the other hand, "in patience he possessed his soul" (Luke xxi. 19), so that the force of affliction could not cast him down. Concerning these two dangers, to wit, pleasure and pain, you may read in one of the psalms, "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand" (Ps. xc. 7); because, namely, many more are cast down from a virtuous life by the false joys of worldly prosperity than by the buffets of bad fortune. Accordingly, most dearly beloved, let none of us ever imagine the way over the waters to be the more expedient for him, deluded by the seemingly level surface of the softer course. For he shall discover great mountains in this apparently smooth sea of prosperity, mountains which are all the more dangerous for that they are invisible. More difficult, doubtless, seems the way that winds to the left over

the steep hills and rugged rocks of adversity : but such as make trial of it find it to be far safer and better than the other. Nevertheless, there are labours to be endured on both roads and dangers to be faced also, as the Apostle well knew, since he said, " By the armour of justice on the right hand and on the left " (2 Cor. vi. 7), so that not without cause do we congratulate them who have passed through fire and water and have been brought to refreshment. Would you like to know what that refreshment is ? Would that there was some one else to describe it for you ! As for me, how can I discourse on that whereof I have no experience ?

Yet it seems to me that I can now hear Malachy speaking of this refreshment, and saying to his soul, " Turn, O my soul, unto thy rest, for the Lord hath been bountiful to thee. For He hath delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from falling " (Ps. cxiv. 7-8). Attend whilst I briefly explain what I take to be the import of these words, but briefly, " because the day is now far spent " (Luke xxiv. 29), and the sermon has already run to greater length than I had designed : for I find it hard to relinquish the delight of speaking about my holy father, and my tongue, loving to pronounce the name of Malachy, is reluctant to bring the discourse to an end. Sin, dearest brethren, is the death of the soul, as you will readily acknowledge unless you have forgotten the words of the Prophet, " The soul that sinneth, the same shall die " (Ezech. xviii. 4). We have, therefore, three reasons for congratulating Malachy : because he is delivered from all sin, because he is delivered from toil, and because he is delivered from danger. For

no longer henceforth can sin be said to dwell in him (Rom. vii. 17), no longer shall he be required to shed penitential tears, no longer will it be needful to warn him of the danger of falling. Elias has now laid aside his mantle (4 Kings ii. 13) : he has therefore nothing to fear, nothing about him which the temptress can touch, much less take hold of (Gen. xxxix. 12). He has mounted his chariot (4 Kings ii. 11) : he has therefore no longer any reason to be afraid of falling. His ascent is pleasant and easy, for he is borne aloft, not as by the labour of his own wings, but reclining at ease in his swiftly mounting car.

To this refreshment, most dearly beloved, let us run with all eagerness " to the odour of the ointments " (Cant. i. 3) of this our blessed father, who seems to-day to have aroused us from our usual tepidity to an ardent desire of heaven. Let us run after him, I say, calling out to him, like the Spouse in the Canticle, " Draw us after thee " (ibid.). And let the sentiments of our hearts and our progress in virtue prove us not ungrateful to the Almighty Who in His infinite mercy has willed that His poor servants, having no merits of their own, should at least have the intercession of a friend at court.

SECOND SERMON ON ST. MALACHY.

Preached on some Anniversary.

It is manifest, most dearly beloved, "that while we are in the body we are absent from the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 6), and consequently that the misery of our banishment as well as the recollection of our sins affords us much greater cause for grief than for rejoicing. Nevertheless, we are admonished by the Apostle to "rejoice with them that rejoice" (Rom. xii. 15), and so we have to-day sufficient cause to open our hearts to feelings of gladness. For if it be true, as the Prophet believed, that "the just rejoice before the face of God" (Ps. lxvii. 4), Malachy, beyond a doubt, must be replenished with gladness, because in his days he pleased God and was found just: "In holiness and justice," he "ministered before Him" (Luke i. 75, Ecclus. xxiv. 14). Yes, and the Lord was pleased with this ministry, and pleased too with this minister. How in truth could He have been otherwise than pleased? For Malachy "delivered the Gospel without charge" (1 Cor. ix. 18); he spread its teachings throughout his native land; he tamed the fierce and barbarous manners of his fellow-countrymen; with "the word of the Spirit" (Ephes. vi. 17) he subdued outlying nations to the sweet yoke of Christ, restoring to Him His inheritance even to the ends of the earth. O fruitful ministry! O faithful minister! Is it not true also that the Father's promise to the Son has been fulfilled by means of Malachy? And that the Father's gaze was

fixed on Malachy what time He thus addressed His Son, " Ask of Me and I will give Thee the gentiles for Thy inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for Thy possession " (Ps. ii. 8) ? Oh, how gladly the Saviour received what He had purchased, and purchased at the price of His own most precious Blood, with the shame of the cross and the horrors of the passion ! How gladly He received the fruit of these from the hands of Malachy for that Malachy had exercised his ministry free of charge ! Therefore the Lord was pleased with the gratuitous service in the minister, and in the ministry with the conversion of sinners. Acceptable, I say, and well pleasing to the Lord was the minister's purity of intention along with the fruit of his ministry, the salvation of souls.

But even though Malachy's ministry had been less fruitful, the Lord would still have had respect to him and to his works (Gen. iv. 4) ; for the Lord loves purity and delights in simplicity ; His justice is wont to estimate the work from the intention, and to judge as to the condition of the whole body from the state of the eye (Matt. vi. 22-3). As the case is, however, " great are the works of the Lord, perfectly accomplished according to all the wills " (Ps. cx. 2) and desires of Malachy ; great indeed, and manifold, and exceedingly good in themselves, but rendered still better by the goodness of the pure intention whence they derived their origin. What work of piety was Malachy ever known to neglect ? Poor towards himself, he was rich to the poor. He made himself " the father of orphans and the judge of widows " (Ps. lvii. 6), and the refuge of the oppressed. " A cheerful giver " (2 Cor. ix. 7), he seldom asked, and received with embarrassed

humility. He laboured with all solicitude and no little success to restore concord between adversaries. Who ever was more tenderly compassionate? more prompt to succour? more fearless in administering correction? For Malachy was full of zeal, nor was he lacking in knowledge (Rom. x. 2) which is the moderator of zeal. He knew how to be weak with the weak (1 Cor. ix. 22), but he knew also how to be mighty with the mighty, how to resist the proud, how to punish tyrants, and how to point out their duties to kings and princes. It was he who, by his prayer, deprived a king of his sight in punishment of injustice, and restored the same when the king had been humbled to penance.* It was

* The king in question seems to have been Turlough O'Connor. We find the following account of this miracle in St. Bernard's *Life of St. Malachy*, ch. xxvii.: "A certain nobleman, having incurred the royal displeasure, was restored to favour by means of Malachy: for the nobleman distrusted the king and would not approach him to sue for pardon, except through Malachy or some other for whom the king had equal respect. The event proved that his fears were not unfounded. Rendered secure and incautious by the pretended reconciliation, he was soon arrested and thrown into prison by order of the king, who hated him now more than ever. The friends of the prisoner, fearing he would be put to death, claimed the intervention of the holy bishop who had guaranteed the man's safety. What was Malachy to do? The only thing possible was to have recourse to his usual expedient in such circumstances. Gathering together all his disciples—the monks of Bangor—he proceeded at the head of this powerful army to the royal residence. He demanded the liberation of the captive and was refused. Then addressing the monarch he said: 'O impious king, thou art acting against the Lord, against me, and against thyself in violating thy promise. But if thou dishonourest thy word, I will not dishonour mine. The prisoner put himself under my protection: if he be put to death, I have betrayed him, I am guilty of his blood. Art thou resolved to prove thyself a perjurer and me a traitor? Know, then, that neither I myself nor those with me will taste any food until this man is set at liberty.' He then entered the church, and with signs and tears he and his companions besought Almighty God to rescue him who was unjustly confined from the power of the wicked and treacherous tyrant. All that day and the following night they

he who gave up to "the spirit of error" (1 John iv. 6) the disturbers of a peace which he had established, and frustrated them in their evil designs, so that they were again obliged to make peace, confounded and stupefied by that which befell them. It was Malachy also to assist whom against other violators of peace a river sprung up, and miraculously interposing its waters, rendered futile their wicked endeavours. No rain had fallen, there had been no inundation, no concurrence of clouds, no liquefaction of snow: when on a sudden that which before had been but a brook was changed into a mighty river, sweeping along, and overflowing its banks, and preventing the passage of them that were on their way to commit an injustice. Cf. *Life of St. Malachy*, c. xxvii.

Oh, "how great things have we heard and known" (Ps. lxxvii. 3) about the zeal of Malachy, and about the vengeance which he wreaked on his Lord's enemies, although he was at the same time "sweet and mild and plenteous in mercy to all" (Ps. lxxxv. 5) who were in need! As if he were the father of all, so did he live for all. He loved and cherished all "as a hen

persevered in prayer and fasting. The king was informed of what was being done, but instead of being softened was hardened the more. The carnal-minded man at last took flight, fearing that if he remained he should have to yield to the power of prayer. As if, forsooth, he could conceal himself from Malachy's eyes or go whither the Saint could not follow! O miserable man, wouldst thou set bounds to the prayers of the saints? Is prayer but as an arrow that thou dost flee from the bow? (Ps. lix. 6). Whither shalt thou go from the Spirit of God, or whither shalt thou flee from His face?" (Ps. cxxxiii. 7). Malachy followed the fugitive and discovered his hiding place. 'Thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun' (Acts xiii. 11), he exclaimed, 'so that thou mayest be able to see in a better manner, and mayest understand how hard it is for thee to kick against the goad' (Acts ix. 5). . . . Then was seen a second Saul led by the hand to a second Ananias, to give up his prey and to recover his sight."—(Translator.)

her chickens" (Matt. xxiii. 37), and "protected them under the covert of his wings" (Ps. lx. 5). He made no distinction of sex, or age, or rank, or condition: he was equally at the service of all, with a heart overflowing with sympathy for all. Whatever was the trouble of those who cried to him for help, he always esteemed it as his own. There was this difference, however, that whereas he was patient under the afflictions proper to himself, with regard to those of his neighbours, he was not only a sufferer by sympathetic participation, but very often an impatient sufferer. For many a time, being full of fervent zeal, he would pour out the vials of his wrath upon the unjust oppressor, so that by delivering the weak and curbing the strong he might consult for the salvation of both the one and the other. He used therefore to show anger sometimes, but only when forbearance would be sin, according to the words of the Psalmist, "Be ye angry, and sin not" (Ps. iv. 5). Anger exercised no dominion over Malachy, but he himself "ruled his spirit" (Prov. xvi. 32). He was master of himself. And plainly he who had triumphed over himself could not be subdued by anger (Job. xxxvi. 18). This passion, therefore, was held under complete control. It came at call, issuing forth when ordered, but never bursting out of itself. It was aroused and directed by reason, not by natural impulse. Neither did it consume its owner with feverish agitation, but was rather employed by him for useful ends. And he exercised the utmost diligence and caution in regulating and restraining not only this passion of anger, but all the motions of his soul and body. For he was not so solicitous for others as to neglect himself; he did not consider his own

soul as the one exception from his general providence. No, he consulted for his own spiritual interests also, and watched over himself as well as over his neighbour. He was, in fact, in such a way all his own and at the same time so completely at the service of every one around him, that he never seemed to be hindered or distracted from attention to himself by the duties of fraternal charity, or by private devotion from external ministrations. Were you to behold him when surrounded by multitudes and busily occupied with public affairs, you would pronounce him born not for himself, but for his people. But if you saw him in retirement, alone with his thoughts, you would conclude that he lived only to God and himself.

Malachy could be calm and recollected in the midst of tumult; and the hours which he devoted to leisure were not spent in idleness. How indeed could idleness have been found in him who was always "employed in the justifications" of the Lord (Ps. cxviii. 23)? True, a portion of his time was left unclaimed by the duties of attending to the necessities of his flock, but it was not left unoccupied by holy meditations, by fervent prayer, or by contemplative quiet. During these hours of retirement he kept silence as far as possible, and if there was need to speak he spoke with gravity. His look was always expressive of kindness and goodwill, but ordinarily downcast and guarded. For he kept his eyes in his head (Eccles. ii. 14)—a practice considered by the wise to be worthy of no little commendation—and did not suffer them to wander about except at the bidding of virtue. His smile was either indicative or provocative of love, and his laugh was rare. Whenever he indulged in it, it was always with

restraint ; nor did he let it burst forth from him with loudness or violence : it served to reveal the joy of his heart in such a way that it did not lessen but rather enhanced the beauty of his countenance. It was so modest that it gave rise to no suspicion of levity, yet hearty enough to brighten up his face and to banish therefrom every cloud or shadow of sadness. O perfect oblation ! O " rich holocaust " (Ps. xix. 4) ! O pleasing service from mind and heart ! How sweet an odour went up to God from the prayers that filled Malachy's leisure ! How good an odour was exhaled to men from the labours of his active ministry !

It was on account of these virtues, therefore, that Malachy " was beloved of God and men " (Ecclus. xlv. 1), and merited to be received to-day into the company of the holy angels, becoming in effect that which his name signifies.* And in truth he was already an angel not less by the purity of his life than by the name he bore : but now the prophecy of that illustrious name has been more blissfully fulfilled in him, for he now enjoys a glory and a happiness equal to that of the angels. Let us rejoice, dearest brethren, let us rejoice, I say, that our angel has ascended to the society of his fellow-citizens as one acting the part of an ambassador (2 Cor. v. 20) for " the children of the captivity " (Dan. v. 13), in order to conciliate in our behalf the favour of the blessed and to make known to them the desires of the miserable. Let us, therefore, I repeat, rejoice and exult because there has gone from our midst to the heavenly court one who has concern for us, one who protects us by his merits, one who has

* The name Malachias signifies " My angel."—(Translator.)

instructed us by the example of his life, and confirmed our faith by his miracles.

The holy Bishop who so often "in the spirit of humility" (Prayer of the Mass) immolated pacific victims in heaven's sight, has gone in person to-day, and as priest and victim, "into the altar of God" (Ps. xlii. 4). By the translation of the priest to glory, his sacrifice has been made more acceptable; the fountain of tears has been dried up, and all his holocaust seasoned with joy and exultation. "Blessed be the Lord God" of Malachy Who "hath visited His people" (Luke i. 68) through the ministry of so great a pontiff, and now "having taken him up into the holy city" (Matt. iv. 5), ceases not to console us in our exile by the memory of the abundance of his sweetness! (Ps. cxliv. 7). And let the spirit of Malachy rejoice in the Lord, for that, being now freed from the burden of this corporeal mass, he is no longer prevented by the earthly, corruptible body from rising with all ease and alacrity above every creature, spiritual and material, and uniting himself wholly to God, cleaving to Whom he shall be one spirit with Him for ever (1 Cor. vi. 17).

Surely, then, "holiness becometh (this) Thy house, O Lord" (Ps. xcii. 5) in which is celebrated the memory of a holiness so sublime. O blessed Malachy, preserve this house in holiness and justice, taking compassion on us who, in the midst of our miseries, so many and great, "publish the memory of the abundance of thy sweetness" (Ps. cxliv. 7). Marvellous indeed has been the dispensation of divine grace in thy regard, causing thee to appear so insignificant in thine own esteem and so glorious in the eyes of God, of that God Who hath wrought such wonders through thee, even the

salvation of thy people, and hath also done such wonders for thee, admitting thee to a participation in His own immortal bliss. May this feast which we celebrate as a devout and well-deserved tribute to thy virtues, may it be signalised for us through the power of thy merits and prayers by an abundant outpouring of heavenly grace. For the festival in honour "of the glory of thy sanctity" (Ps. cxliv. 5) which we are now observing and which the holy angels observe for evermore, shall be to us a worthy occasion for rejoicing then only when we make it also an occasion of profit to our souls. Holy Pontiff, assembled here to-day on thy most sweet festivity, we ask that it be allowed us at thy departure to retain some small remnants of the fruits of the Spirit burdened wherewith thou mountest to the sky.

Be to us, we implore thee, O blessed Malachy, be to us as another Moses, or as another Elias; and as these to their disciples, so do thou give us of thy spirit (Num. xi. 15, 4 Kings ii. 25) for thou hast come in the spirit and power of them both (Luke i. 17). Thy life has been for us "a law of life and discipline" (Ecclus. xlv. 6); thy death a refuge from death and the portal of immortality; thy memory the very savour of sweetness and grace; and thy presence as "a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord" (Is. lxii. 3). O "fruitful olive-tree in the house of God!" (Ps. li. 10), "O oil of gladness" (Ps. xliv. 8), giving both unction and illumination, fostering us with favours, enlightening us with miracles!—make us, we beg of thee, participators in the glory and happiness which thou art enjoying. O sweet-smelling lily which springeth and flowereth for ever before the Lord, diffusing everywhere the life-

giving odour of thy sweetness, thou whose memory is in benediction" (Ecclus. xlv. 1) amongst men here below and whose presence is honourable to the angels!—suffer not us who celebrate thy praises to be defrauded of a share of the fulness that is thine. "O great luminary" (Ps. cxxxv. 7), "light shining in darkness" (John i. 4), making our prison bright and "the city of God joyful" (Ps. xlv. 5) with the refulgence of thy miracles and merits!—banish from our souls the darkness of vice by the splendours of thy virtues. O morning star, brighter than the other stars in proportion as thou art nearer to the day and more like to the sun!—deign to move before us so that we also may "walk in the light" (1 John i. 7), as "the children of light, not of the night nor of darkness" (1 Thess. v. 5). O dawn trembling into day upon the earth, but at the same time meridian splendour illuminating the loftier regions of heaven!—admit us to a participation of that Divine Light, irradiated wherewith thou dost shine far and wide externally and burnest sweetly within, through the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who with the Father and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth one God for ever and ever. Amen.

APPENDIX.

ST. BERNARD'S FIRST EPISTLE TO ST. MALACHY.

[St. Malachy returning from Rome in the year 1140 visited the abbey of Clairvaux, where he left four of his companions to be instructed in the spirit and observances of the Cistercian Order. On arriving home, he sent a few more of his disciples to be trained in the same school of religious perfection. These he made the bearers of a letter to the illustrious Abbot, St. Bernard, and also of a walking-stick—presumably an Irish blackthorn—for the Saint's personal use. The following is St. Bernard's acknowledgment. It is only as an honorary title he addresses Malachy as "Archbishop of the Irish." There were no canonical archbishops in Ireland before the year 1150. —Translator.]

To his venerable lord and most blessed father, Malachy, by the grace of God Archbishop of the Irish and Legate of the Apostolic See, Brother Bernard, styled Abbot of Clairvaux, sends greeting and prays that he may find favour with the Lord.

Amidst the many cares and anxieties of my heart, by the multitude whereof "my soul is troubled exceedingly" (Ps. vi. 4), the brothers, come hither from a far country to serve the Lord, thy letter, "and thy staff, they have comforted me" (Ps. xxii. 4). For in the letter I have proof of thy love, the staff helps to support my weak body, whilst the brothers console me by the fervour which they show, serving God "in the spirit of humility" (from the Prayer of the Mass). I have received all, I am pleased with all, "all work together unto good" for me (Rom. viii. 28).

But with regard to the desire thou hast expressed that two of thy brothers * should be sent home to thee in order to select a suitable site for the new foundation, I have come to the conclusion, after talking the matter over with these Irish monks, that they ought not to be separated from each other, until Christ has been more fully formed in them (Gal. iv. 19), and they have learned perfectly how to fight the battles of the Lord (Ps. xvii. 35). Therefore, as soon as they have been thoroughly trained in the school of the Holy Spirit, as soon as they have been "endued with power from on high" (Luke xxiv. 49), the children shall return to their father, to "sing the songs of the Lord" not now "in a strange land" (Ps. cxxxvi. 4), but in the land of their birth.

Do thou, in the meantime, "according to the wisdom given" thee by the Lord (2 Peter iii. 15), choose and make ready a home for them, like the houses of the Order which thou hast seen in France, in a spot far removed from the noise and bustle of the world. For the day is drawing nigh when, through the grace of God, we shall send back to thee men made new from old. "Blessed be the name of the Lord for evermore" (Dan. ii. 20) to Whose bounty I owe it that I have children in common with thee! It was thou that "planted" by thy preaching, I "watered" by exhortation, "but God gave the increase" (1 Cor. iii. 6).

I beg of thee, holy father, not to desist from announcing the word of God, so that thou mayest "give the knowledge of salvation to His people" (Luke i. 77). Thou art obliged to this by a twofold obligation,

* That is, two of the four left with St. Bernard in the return from Rome.—(Translator.)

in virtue of thy legatine office and in virtue of thy episcopal charge. For the rest, since "in many things we all offend" (James iii. 2), and since we who often have occasion to mix with the men of the world must necessarily be powdered with some of the world's dust, I commend myself to thy prayers and to those of thy disciples, that Jesus Christ, the very Source of piety, may vouchsafe to wash and cleanse us from our stains in the fountain of His mercy: for it is He Who said to Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with Me" (John xiii. 8). This service I not only solicit of thee as a favour, but demand as a right, because I, for my part, do not neglect to importune the Lord for thee, if yet the prayers of a poor sinner can be of any avail. Farewell in the Lord.

SECOND EPISTLE TO ST. MALACHY.

This seems to have been written towards the end of 1141, and was brought to Ireland by the first band of religious sent hither from Clairvaux, who in the following year founded the abbey of Mellifont.—Translator.)

To Malachy, by the grace of God Bishop and Legate of the Apostolic See, Brother Bernard, styled Abbot of Clairvaux, presents his humble respects and devoted duty.

I have done, holy father, what thou hast enjoined, and if not with all the perfection which the work deserved, at least as thoroughly as the time permitted. So great indeed and so widespread is the malice of the day that even the little which has been accomplished was scarcely possible to me. I have sent thee, as thou seest, a very scanty supply of seed in order that thou mayest sow even a small part of that field into which the true Isaac went forth of old to meditate, what time Rebecca was first brought to him by Abraham's servant and happily united to him in everlasting wedlock (Gen. xxiv. 63). But insignificant though it looks, this seed must not be despised, because through it we now behold fulfilled in thy country what was spoken long ago by the Prophet, "except the Lord of hosts had left us seed, we had been as Sodom and we should have been like to Gomorrha" (Is. i. 9). Accordingly, I have sown; do thou water, and God will give the increase (1 Cor. iii. 6). I salute through thee all the saints of thy household, commending myself to the holy prayers of them and thee. Farewell.

THIRD EPISTLE TO ST. MALACHY.

The bearers of this epistle were probably the two monks of whom it makes mention, Christian and Robert. Christian was an Irishman, born, according to Hartry, between Lismore and Dungarvan. He was one of the four disciples left by Malachy at Clairvaux, where he had as fellow-novice him who was afterwards known as Pope Eugenius III. As it was designed to make him abbot of the Irish foundation, he needed to be more fully instructed than the others in the observances of the Order, hence he remained longer at the feet of St. Bernard. He afterwards became Bishop of Lismore and Apostolic Legate in Ireland. But before his death he resigned all his dignities, and lived as a simple monk in the abbey of Odorney, Co. Kerry, where he died in the odour of sanctity about the year 1186. This epistle was written in 1142.—Translator.

To his most loving father and most reverend lord, Malachy, by the grace of God Bishop and Legate of the Holy and Apostolic See, Brother Bernard, styled Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes health, and promises the benefit of his humble prayers.

"How sweet are thy words to my palate" (Ps. cxviii. 103), my beloved lord and father! how delightful to my soul is the very thought of thee! If there be any capacity of tenderness in me, any power of devotion, any force of spiritual affection, be sure my dearest friend, that my love of thee claims and appropriates it all. But there is no necessity to multiply words where feelings are so manifest. For I am confident that the Spirit Whom thou hast from God giveth testimony to thine own spirit (Rom. viii. 16) that all that I am, little though it be, is unreservedly thine. And thou, on thy side, O father most loving and most beloved, "deliver not up to (oblivion) the soul of the poor man" (Ps. lxxiii. 19), which is united to thee by the bonds of tenderest affection, "and forget not for ever the soul of thy poor servant" (ibid.). I do not

now as for the first time commend myself to thy love, since for many years I have rejoiced in the Lord that my littleness has found favour in the eyes of thy holiness: I only pray that thine old love for me may wax stronger and stronger, daily advancing to new degrees. I commend to thee my children, yea, thy children also, and that all the more earnestly because they are so far distant. Thou knowest that, after God, I sent them with fullest confidence in thee, because I felt certain I should be doing wrong in not complying with thy wishes. Deal with them, therefore, as becomes thee: embrace them and cherish them with all the tenderness of sincere charity. Let nothing whatever cause thee at any time to lessen thy zeal and solicitude in their regard, lest that should perish "which thy right hand hath planted" (Ps. lxxix. 16).

I learn from thine epistle and also from the account brought back to me by my own religious that the new foundation is making good progress, and is prospering both materially and spiritually. On this I congratulate thee with my whole heart, and I render my most grateful acknowledgments to the Divine Goodness and to thy paternal solicitude. But, holy father, there is still great need of thy watchful attention with regard to this community, which is yet young, and moreover is established in a country unfamiliar, or rather altogether unacquainted with the monastic life. Therefore I beseech thee in the Lord not to withdraw thy hand but to carry forward to full perfection the work thou hast so well begun (Phil. i. 6). As for those monks of mine who have returned from Ireland, I should have been better pleased with them had they remained. But perchance they found some excuse for

thus retracing their steps in the less disciplined manners of the native Irish brethren, and particularly in the unwillingness they showed to take advice concerning matters whereof they had until the present no experience at all.

I have sent to thee my most dear son Christian—who is thy son also—instructed as fully as possible in all that appertains to our Order, and as I trust, determined to show himself for the future still more exact than heretofore in carrying out its observances. Be not surprised that I have not sent a number of religious with him. The reason is this, that I was not able to find many suitable persons who were willing to go, and I did not judge it wise to compel the reluctant. But my best-beloved son Robert * consented to my prayers on the present occasion also, as a true child of obedience. Let it be thy care, holy father, to co-operate with him in his labours, so that the monastery thou hast founded may be quickly provided with the full complement of buildings and other necessaries. One more suggestion I will offer to thy paternity. It is that thou wouldst use thine influence to persuade men of exemplary life and such as may be expected to prove worthy religious to enter the community. People will readily follow thy counsel, and thus shalt thou promote most effectually the interests of the house. Farewell, holy father, and remember me in Christ.

* This Robert was apparently the architect of Mellifont Abbey. From what is said here we may gather that he was one of the French monks who came across in 1141 with the Irish brethren to help them in setting up the new establishment and returned to Clairvaux on finding that the natives were unwilling to be guided by their counsels. The reason of the dispute may have been that the native religious wished to have the monastery constructed on the model of the ancient Irish abbeys, whilst the French insisted on preserving uniformity with the other Cistercian houses.—(Translator.)

EPISTLE TO THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES OF IRELAND ON THE OCCASION OF ST. MALACHY'S DEATH.

WRITTEN IN NOVEMBER, 1148.

To his religious brethren who are in Ireland, and especially to the communities established by the Bishop Malachy of blessed memory, Brother Bernard, styled Abbot of Clairvaux, wishes health and consolation in the Holy Ghost.

Brethren, had we "here a lasting city" (Heb. xiii. 14) we might well lament, and with most abundant tears, the loss of so noble a fellow-citizen. But if we rather "seek one that is to come" (ibid.), as we are bound to do, we have still in truth no slight cause for sorrow in the removal of so necessary a guide; nevertheless the knowledge of faith ought to temper the poignancy of our grief, and assured hope moderate its violence. No one need be surprised if occasionally a sob breaks forth from the wounded heart, if the sense of desolation forces tears from the troubled eyes. But we must try to keep such manifestations within due bounds, yea, rather we have no little cause to feel consoled, "while we look, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. iv. 18). First of all, then, we ought to congratulate the holy soul of Malachy on the bliss it has attained, lest otherwise he should reproach us with our want of charity, and should say

to us, as the Lord to His apostles, "If you loved me you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father" (John xiv. 28). Yes, brethren, the spirit of our father has gone before us to the presence of "the Father of spirits" (Heb. xii. 9); and we shall be proved to be wanting not alone in charity, but equally in gratitude for all the benefits which we have received through him, if we do not now rejoice with our benefactor who has passed from labour to repose, from perils to security, "from this world to the Father" (John xiii. 1). Therefore, if filial piety prompts us to weep for Malachy dead, the same filial piety prompts us, and with greater urgency, to rejoice with Malachy living. Is he not living? Undoubtedly he is, and living in bliss. "In the sight of the unwise he seemed to die, and his departure was taken for misery, and his going away from us for utter destruction: but he is in peace" (Wisdom iii. 2).

In the next place, the consideration of our own advantage gives us another motive for joy and exultation: that so powerful a patron, so faithful an advocate, has gone before us to plead our cause at the heavenly court, a father whose burning charity can never allow him to forget his children and whose tried sanctity must find favour with God. Who would be so rash as to suppose that the blessed Malachy has now less love for his own, or less power to assist them? He was indeed loved of God during his life upon earth, but now we may be certain he has received more manifest proofs of the divine love. And for himself, "having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (John xiii. 1). God forbid that we should consider thy prayers less efficacious

now, O holy soul, when in the very presence of the Divine Majesty thou canst be more instant in supplication, when thou no longer "walkest by faith" (2 Cor. v. 7) but art crowned already with the vision of glory! God forbid that thy charity, heretofore so full of energy, should be thought less ardent now, not to speak of its utter extinction, when, having arrived at the very fountain of eternal charity, thou art drinking copious draughts of that divine love, the smallest drops of which thou didst so thirst for on earth! Malachy's love could not yield to death, because it was as "strong as death" (Cant. viii. 6), yea, it was stronger than death. For even at the moment of his departure hence he was not unmindful of you, his Irish children, but with tenderest affection commended you to God, and also with his usual sweetness and humility besought me, unworthy as I am, not to forget you for ever. Therefore I have thought it well to write to you and to let you know that we are ready with all good will to minister to you whatever spiritual consolation our poverty may be able to command through the merits of our blessed father, and temporal assistance too, according to our opportunities.

And here I should like to express to you also, most dearly beloved, my profound sympathy with the Irish Church in this her sad bereavement. And our compassion for you is all the greater for that—as I acknowledge—what has been such an affliction to you has made us more than ever your debtors. For "the Lord hath done great things for us" (Ps. cxxv. 3) in that He has vouchsafed to honour our abbey by making it the scene of so holy a death, and to enrich it with the priceless treasure of Malachy's body. I pray you,

brethren, take it not amiss that your blessed father is buried amongst us: for so it has been ordained by God "according to the multitude of His tender mercies" (Ps. cv. 45), that you should have him in life and that we should have him even in death. For he was and is a common father to us all, and this as his last will and testament was confirmed to us at his death (Heb. ix. 17). Wherefore, for the sake of so noble a father we embrace you all as our true brothers in Christ and with the whole affection of our hearts; and our spiritual relationship to each other encourages us to believe that you on your side entertain the like fraternal sentiments in our regard.

Finally, I exhort you, dearest brethren, to be careful to walk always in the footsteps of our holy father, and that the more zealously, inasmuch as daily intercourse with him has given you opportunities for observing more closely the sanctity of his life. For in this especially you will prove yourselves his true children, if you courageously follow the path he has marked out for you; and if, as you have learned from his words and example "how you ought to walk, so also you walk that you may abound the more" (1 Thess. iv. 1): for a father's glory is the wisdom of his sons (Prov. x. 1).

Even I myself had begun in earnest to shake off my usual sloth and tepidity and to acquire some fervour owing to the presence in our midst of such a model of perfection. God grant that he may so draw us after him by the fresh odour of his virtues as to make us run on in his footsteps, even to the end of our course, with ever greater zeal and alacrity (Cant. i. 3).

Pray for us, brethren, and may Christ Jesus protect you all.

CLOSING SCENES OF ST. MALACHY'S LIFE.

Translated from the Life by St. Bernard, Chapters xxx.–xxxi.

Being once asked where, if given his choice, he would prefer to breathe his last, the holy Bishop hesitated and was unwilling to reply. But when pressed by his disciples (the monks of Bangor) who had been asking and answering the same question amongst themselves he said at length, "If I am destined to die in my native land, nowhere should I so gladly await the Resurrection as in the place where our Apostle lies buried (by the 'Apostle' he meant St. Patrick). But if death is to find me outside Ireland, in that case I have made choice of Clairvaux." To the question as to what day he would select for his exit, he answered that he would like to pass hence on the solemnity of All Souls. If we consider these words as mere expressions of his wishes, they were exactly realised. If as predictions, not a single iota failed of fulfilment. "As we have heard, so have we seen" (Ps. xlvii. 9), with regard both to the place and the time. Let me now explain briefly the manner and occasion of the accomplishment.

It had long been a source of deep regret to Malachy that the Irish Church could not as yet boast of a single archiepiscopal pall. For so high an appreciation had he of such sacred prerogatives, that he could not endure to see his nation deprived of even one. The recollection that Pope Innocent II. had engaged to satisfy his desire only served to sadden him the more, because he had

neglected to demand the fulfilment of the promise during that Pontiff's lifetime. In the year 1148, therefore, when it was reported that Eugene III., then Pope, had come on a visit to France, Malachy's hopes revived, and he rejoiced at so favourable an opportunity of meeting him. For he thought he might presume on the good-will of Eugene. It seemed to him that his request must be readily granted by a Pope of such noble personal qualities, who was besides a member of the Cistercian Order, and, above all, a specially loved son of Clairvaux. So the bishops of the Irish Church were summoned, and they assembled in council. Three days were spent in settling various other important matters, and on the fourth the question of applying for the palliums came up for discussion. The prelates fell in with Malachy's views, but wished that the application should be made not by him but some other. However, as the journey would now be so much shorter, and consequently so much less fatiguing, they yielded at last to his solicitations, and allowed him to have his way. No sooner was the Synod dissolved than Malachy set out for France, some few of his disciples being permitted to accompany him as far as the coast. One of these, named Catholicus, with tearful eyes and tremulous voice, addressed him thus: "Alas, my father, thou art going from us! And although well aware to what almost daily afflictions thou art abandoning me thou hast no compassion on my misery. Perhaps my sins deserve such treatment. Yet what have my brethren done that they should be condemned to the weary work of watching and guarding me day and night without respite?" And the poor fellow wept. Such words and tears went to the Bishop's fatherly

heart. Malachy embraced the brother affectionately, and signing his breast with the sign of the cross, answered, "Rest assured, my child, that thou shalt not be troubled again until my return." This Catholicus was an epileptic, subject to frequent fits, sometimes several in the same day. At that time he had been a victim to the dread disease six years. Yet at Malachy's word he was perfectly cured. From that hour to this he has suffered no new attack, and, as I hope, will enjoy the same immunity for the future, since never again shall Malachy return.

Just as the holy Bishop was embarking, two of his brethren approached with the request that he would grant them a favour. "What is it you desire?" he asked them. "We will not tell thee," answered they, "unless thou first promise to grant it." So he gave the promise. Then they said, "We want an assurance from thy paternity that thou wilt come back safe to Ireland." The rest of the company united with them in this prayer. Malachy deliberated for some time, very sorry now that he had pledged himself, and seeing no way out of his predicament. He saw himself beset with difficulties, with no other choice but either to violate his engagement or to forfeit his heart's desire. At length he made up his mind to choose that alternative which at the time was the more urgent, and to leave the rest to the disposition of divine providence. He therefore acceded to the request of his disciples, yet sadly, and only because he was unwilling to grieve them. So, having given them the desired assurance he went on board. The good ship had completed about half of its watery way, when lo! a violent storm sprung up on a sudden, and she was driven back again to the

Irish coast. Malachy went ashore and spent the night in a church of his own that stood close to the harbour. Filled with joy, he gave thanks to God Whose providence had enabled him to keep his promise without prejudice to his hope. Early next morning he re-embarked, and after a prosperous voyage, landed in Scotland. Three days later he arrived at a place called Greenpool, where he had caused preparations to be made for the erection of a Cistercian monastery. He left there an abbot and a colony of monks, who had crossed over with him from Ireland, and bidding them farewell, proceeded on his way.

After leaving Greenpool he was met by David, King of Scotland, who received him with great joy. He spent some days with the monarch, during which he accomplished much for the glory of God, and then resumed his journey. Passing through Scotland he visited the church of Gisburn, on the English border, where certain religious men lived under a canonical rule of life, and had been long known to him by the repute of their piety and regular observance. There he healed a woman who was brought to him, suffering from the disease commonly called cancer, and reduced to a most frightful condition. The cure was wrought by sprinkling the parts affected with water blessed by Malachy, which instantly relieved the pain, and on the following day the ulcers had all but disappeared. Proceeding hence, he came to the English coast, but was not allowed to take passage for France. The reason of this, if I mistake not, was a quarrel between the Pope and the English King, Stephen, and a suspicion entertained by the latter of some evil consequence to himself if Malachy were permitted to pass

to the Continent. Indeed, no bishop was suffered to cross from England to France at that time. This delay, although contrary to our pilgrim's present will and desire, was not really opposed to his primary purpose. And he lamented as an obstacle to his design what was in truth actually conducive to its realisation. For had he secured an immediate passage, he would have to hasten into Italy after the Pontiff, with no opportunity of turning aside to visit Clairvaux, because Eugene had now quitted France, and was already at Rome, or near it. But the royal prohibition, by delaying his crossing, concurred in bringing him opportunely to the place and the hour of his most holy death.

Albeit he came from the west, we received him as a true "Orient from on high" visiting us (Luke i. 78). Oh, what a flood of light did that radiant sun pour out upon our Clairvaux! How joyous a festivity did his advent inaugurate! "This was a day which the Lord hath made" (Ps. cxvii. 24), and we were "glad and rejoiced therein." All weak and trembling though I was, with what a brisk and bounding step I hurried out at once to meet my guest! How eagerly I rushed to embrace him! With what happy arms I clasped to my breast the heaven-sent grace vouchsafed me! With what an exulting heart and face I led thee, O my father, into the house of my mother, into the chamber of her who bore me! (Cant. iii. 4). What festive days we spent together, all too few, alas! And on his side how did he, our pilgrim, show himself towards us? How but genial and affable, and indescribably amiable to all! "How good and how pleasant" (Ps. cxxxii. 1) a guest he made himself amongst those whom he had come to see from the ends of the earth! Yet he

came not, as the Queen of Saba to hear a Solomon (3 Kings x. 1) but rather to exhibit one in himself. For we have heard his wisdom; we have enjoyed and do still in spirit enjoy his company.

Four or five days of this gladsome festivity of his presence amongst us had already passed by, when behold, on the feast of St. Luke the Evangelist, October 18th, after celebrating the Holy Mysteries in the church with his usual devotion, he fell sick of a fever and was obliged to take to his bed. The illness which struck him down prostrated us all with him. Thus "mourning taketh hold of the end of joy" (Prov. xiv. 13). Still our sorrow was not excessive, for the fever did not appear to be dangerous. Then might you see the brethren bustling about, eager to give and to receive. The very sight of the sick man was a source of consolation to all. But sweeter still was it to wait upon him. And both to see and to serve him were as salutary as consoling. To minister to him was for all of us a labour of love, yea, and a source of spiritual profit, since it was rewarded with an infusion of heavenly grace. All stood around him. All were "busy with much serving" (Luke x. 40), preparing medicines, offering soothing drinks, with frequent invitations to take nourishment. But Malachy said, "You are troubling yourselves to no purpose. Nevertheless I will do whatever you tell me." He spoke thus, for he knew that the hour of his departure was at hand.

The brethren who had accompanied him from Ireland, insisted with him, in their over-confidence, that there was no need to despair of recovery, since as yet no symptoms of death had appeared. He only replied. "It is necessary that Malachy's soul should leave the

body this year." Then he added, "Behold the day is near on which, as you know, I have always wished to die. 'I know Whom I have believed, and I am certain' (2 Tim. i. 1) that, having already obtained a part, I shall not be defrauded of the rest of my desire. He Whose gracious providence has brought me to the place of my choice will not refuse me the other favour longed for with equal ardour, viz., the happiness of ending my days here. As for my body, 'This is my rest' (Ps. cxxxi. 14). God will provide for my soul, 'Who saveth them that hope in Him' (Ps. xvi. 7). And it is no small hope that is laid up for me against that day whereon the dead receive so many benefits from the living." The day referred to, All Souls', was not far distant when these words were spoken. Meantime he asked to be anointed. The whole community were about to proceed to his bedside in processional order for the solemn administration of the Last Sacraments, but he would not suffer this. Rather he must needs come down to us from the upper chamber where he lay. So he received Extreme Unction and Holy Viaticum in the church, commending himself to the prayers of the brethren, and the brethren to God. He then returned to his bed. As he had walked to the church without assistance, from his remote room at the top of the house, so now without assistance he walked back again. Yet he told us that death was at hand. Who would believe that this man was dying? None but God and himself could have known it. His face did not appear paler or more haggard than usual. The brow was not furrowed, nor the eyes sunken, nor the nose sharpened, nor the lips contracted, nor the teeth dry and discoloured (*non adusti dentes*) nor the

neck pinched and attenuated, nor the shoulders stooped, nor did any part of the body exhibit unusual leanness. There was the same symmetry and grace of form, the same beauty of face and feature, unimpaired even by death's approach. As in life, so did he appear in death, there being nothing in the exterior to indicate any change.

To this point have I run with my narrative. But here I must pause and hesitate, because Malachy has finished his course. He has come to a stand, and I have to stand with him. For who would willingly run to death? Thy death, especially, O blessed father, who would be in a hurry to speak of? And who would wish to be told of it? As for us, having loved him in life, we shall not be parted from him in death. My brethren, let us not now forsake the dead whose living presence it gave us so much delight to honour. From remotest Hibernia he hastened hither to die in our midst. "Let us also go and die with him" (John xi. 16). No, I cannot help speaking of that death which I could not help witnessing.

Well, it is the feast of All Saints, celebrated with such pomp and splendour throughout the whole world. But as it is written, "Music in mourning is like a tale out of time" (Ecclus. xxii. 6). We are standing by. We try to sing the usual anthems, though it is with little inclination. We weep as we sing, and we sing as we weep. Malachy joins neither in our music nor in our mourning. Why indeed should he sorrow who is hastening to bliss? But for us who are being left behind, there is nothing left but lamentation. Malachy alone keeps holiday. And what he cannot do externally, he does in spirit, according as it is written, "The thought of

man shall give praise to Thee, and the remainders of the thought shall keep holiday to Thee" (Ps. lxxv. 11). As the bodily faculties fail him, and the material tongue is hushed in silence, and the voice ceases to perform its functions, it only remains for him to keep holiday with the jubilee of his mind. Why should he not be festive who is so soon to be admitted to the everlasting festivity of the saints? He now pays them the honour which shall soon be paid to himself, for yet a little while and Malachy shall be numbered with the blessed.

At the close of the day, when we have celebrated the solemnity as best we could, it becomes manifest that the holy Bishop is approaching, not indeed the dusk of evening, but the dawning of eternal day. Is not that moment as a dawn to him when "the night has passed and the day is as hand?" (Rom. xiii. 12). As the fever increases in intensity, a hot perspiration breaks out all over his body, so that in a manner, like the Psalmist, he was brought to refreshment "through fire and water" (Ps. lxv. 12). We are now in despair of his recovery. Now everyone corrects his previous judgment, and no doubt remains but that Malachy's prediction is to be justified by the event. We are summoned, and we hasten to his bedside. Lifting up his eyes, he looks upon us as we stand about him. Then he whispers, "'With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you' (Luke xxii. 15). I give thanks to the Divine Goodness that I am not defrauded of that desire." Behold here a man confident at death, and, ere yet departed, secure of life! And small wonder. Perceiving the approach of that long-looked for night and the brightness of dawn breaking upon him from

the obscurity thereof, as if triumphing over it, he seems to mock at the darkness and to exclaim, "Now I shall say no longer, 'perhaps the darkness shall cover me,' because this 'night shall be my light in my pleasures' (Ps. cxxx. vii. 11)." Then sweetly consoling us, he goes on, "Be mindful of me, and I will remember you, if it be permitted, as it shall be. I have believed in God, and "to him who believeth all things are possible" (Mark ix. 22). I have loved God, and I have loved you, and 'charity never falleth away' (1 Cor. xiii. 8)." Having said this, he raises his eyes to heaven and prays thus: "O God, 'keep them in Thy name' (John xvii. 11) and not them only, but all who through my word or ministry have dedicated themselves to Thy service." With this, he lays hands on each of us, blesses us one by one, and orders us to return to rest, as his hour has not yet come.

We retire, but are recalled about midnight. For at that hour it is announced that a light is beginning to glimmer in the darkness. The sick-room is crowded, as the whole community are assembled. There are also present several abbots, who happen to be on a visit to Clairvaux. "With psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles" (Col. iii. 16) we escort our friend home from the land of his exile. So, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, at the place and the hour he himself had predicted, Malachy, Bishop and Legate of the Holy See, was taken up from our arms by angels, and blissfully slept in the Lord. And surely that was but slumber. The peaceful expression of the face indicated a peaceful passage. Although the eyes of all were fixed upon him nobody could tell exactly

at what moment he expired. When dead he was thought to be still alive, and to be already dead whilst yet living. So little was there to distinguish the one state from the other. There was the old vivacity, the old serenity of expression, as he if were but asleep, and, to all appearance, rather enhanced than effaced by death. Unchanged in himself, he changed us all, for by a most marvellous transformation, our grief was converted into gladness, and our mournful lamentations into hymns of joy. Amidst such jubilant canticles, the corpse is borne forth on the shoulders of the abbots, and down to the church. We are celebrating not ordinary funeral rites, but the victory of faith, and the triumph of love. There is no excitement or confusion. Everything is calm and decorous. Everything proceeds in due order.

And in truth, what reason could there be in immoderate grief for Malachy, as if his death were not precious (Ps. cxv. 15), as if it were not less death than slumber, as if not rather an escape from death and a door leading unto life? Malachy, "our friend sleepeth" (John xi. 11), and shall I give way to sorrow? Not in reason, but only in custom can such grief find justification. The Lord has "given sleep to His beloved" (Ps. cxxvi. 2), and a sleep which contains "the inheritance of the Lord, children, the reward, the fruit of the womb" (ibid. 3). And which of these seems to call for lamentation? Ought I to sorrow for him whom sorrow can reach no more? He keeps a jubilee, he celebrates a triumph, he has been admitted into the "joy of his Lord" (Matt. xxv. 21), and am I to mourn over him? No! The happiness I desire for myself I must not envy him.

But meanwhile we prepare for the obsequies. The Holy Sacrifice is offered up for his eternal repose, and everything is carried out according to usage, and with the greatest devotion. At some distance from the remains was standing a boy with a paralysed arm, which hung from his shoulder, more a hindrance than a help to him. As soon as I discovered his presence I beckoned him to approach. Then taking hold of his withered hand I touched it to Malachy's and instantly it was cured. For the grace of healing lived still in that holy corpse, and the Bishop's hand was to the hand of the boy what the bones of Eliseus were of old to the body brought for burial (4 Kings xiii. 21). That boy had come from a long distance. He now returned home with the arm perfectly restored, which he had brought hanging helplessly at his side. When the last rites were all accomplished, the sacred remains were interred in Our Lady's Chapel, so dear to the heart of Malachy, on November 2nd, in the year of grace 1148. That holy body is Thy possession, O good Jesus, entrusted to our care. It is Thy treasure deposited with us. We shall keep * it safe for Thee and return it

* This promise was faithfully fulfilled. So long as St. Bernard's sons retained possession of their patrimony the bones of the great Bishop were preserved with the utmost honour. In 1191, the year after St. Malachy's canonization by Clement III., the relics were solemnly translated to the community church, and laid beside the bones of St. Bernard, This was in accordance with the prediction or wish of the latter, " We have loved him in life, we shall not be parted from him in death," a wish or prediction destined to receive a more perfect fulfilment later on. At his own request also, St. Bernard was buried in his friend's habit, kept for that purpose until 1153, as his cowl had been Malachy's winding-sheet. It was on the occasion of the above-mentioned translation that some relics of their holy patron were sent to the monks of Mellifont and other Irish Cistercian communities. Apparently at the same time, the heads of the two saints, Bernard and Malachy,

when Thou thinkest well to demand it back. Only grant that Thy servant may not go forth to meet Thee at Thy coming, without us, his companions, and that, as he shared our hospitality here, so may we share in his glory hereafter, and reign with Thee and him for ever and ever. Amen.

were encased in separate processional reliquaries, and kept in the sacristy of Clairvaux. At the beginning of the Revolution these priceless treasures were removed for safe keeping. They were presented to the Cathedral of Troyes in 1813, and given the places of honour on the high altar, the relic of St. Bernard on the left, that of St. Malachy on the right. The abbey of Clairvaux was secularised in 1792. The new owner, an enterprising citizen, converted the church into a glass factory, and finding the grand marble monuments of the two saints in his way, caused them both to be demolished. The skeletons, minus the skulls, were found in good condition, enclosed in leaden coffins, and enveloped in shrouds of silk and fine linen, beautifully embroidered. By order of the civil authority, the contents of both coffins were placed in the same wooden box and sent for burial to the parish cemetery of Ville Sous l'Afferté. But, thanks to the good curé, this final and most horrible sacrilege was prevented. Through his management the sacred relics were conveyed secretly to the village church and deposited in the sacristy. Although the bones are commingled, they are easily distinguishable by their colour; one set, allowed to be the remains of St. Malachy, being milk white, the other dark brown. The latter are also much longer and larger, a fact which fits in very well with the descriptions we read of St. Bernard's physique. Several other French churches claim to possess relics of St. Malachy, including his chalice and mitre. It is interesting to note that he was the first Irish Saint to receive formal canonization.—(Translator.)

ST. BERNARD'S HYMN TO ST. MALACHY.

GIVEN AS AUTHENTIC BY MARTÉNE AND MABILLON.

For manners sweet and prodigies renowned,
With merits and with triumphs many crowned,
Our Malachy to-day this mortal clod
Has laid aside and mounted up to God.
No empty title was the name he bore:
No angel he in name and nothing more:
He lived an angel, and the angels now
Their peer in glory Malachy avow.
Our angel has his fellow-angels' love
To gratify, rejoined the choirs above,
And holds his rightful place among the blest,
High as the highest, higher than the rest.*
In innocence and hard austerity,
In doctrine, faith, and gain of souls was he
Not less than the apostles, in whose band
His merit now entitles him to stand.
High Priest and Legate, by the work assigned
To him, as by the virtues of his mind,
The Twelve he emulated, and thereby
Deserved to reign with them beyond the sky.

* "Praeminet multis, coaequatur summis." The Saint insinuates that Malachy was admitted into the choir of Seraphim. Such an opinion is not so extravagant as may at first sight appear. For if angels fell from every choir, and if, as the fathers commonly suppose, men have been created to fill up the places thus left vacant, we are justified in concluding that some of Adam's race shall sit enthroned amongst the Seraphim. Cf. St. Bernard's first Sermon for Advent, also St. Thomas, *Sum.*, P, I. q. cviii. a. 8.—(Translator.)

But if you ask what mighty signs he wrought,
No tongue can tell the whole: yet this one ought
To show what power was his: he raised the dead,
Reviving flesh whence life and sense had fled.
Though now with Christ, can those he loved of yore
Believe he cares and feels for them no more?
That he, so humble, guards not from above
The poor and humble with his ancient love?
Avaunt the thought that change of state has dried
Or made love's fount to flow with lesser tide!
Avaunt the thought that for the orphans thou,
The orphans' father, hast no feeling now!
O Malachy, whose bones amongst us laid,
Our "Vale of glory" * have more glorious made,
O guard, we humbly pray, and never cease
This house, thou didst so love, to guard in peace.
To God the Father and His only Son,
And to the Holy Spirit, Three in One,
Now and for ever as to One in Three
May equal honour, equal glory be.

Amen.

* This is the meaning of Clairvaux—*clara vallis.*—(Translator.)

Printed by Browne and Nolan, Ltd., Nassau Street, Dublin.

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Saint Bernard's Sermons for the seasons... / A priest of Mt. Melleray

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